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Defining Our Experience: A Psychosocial Analysis of the Racial, Gendered and Subjectivity of Black Women Employees in the British Prison Service

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Abstract

Prison occupation literature portrays an axiomatic image of the white male prison officer, which has a significant impact on mainstream society's perception of the people who work in prisons. This image of the prison employee inadvertently renders black women 'invisible' and places them on the margins of the organisation.

This thesis takes a different approach to examining prison occupation by applying new and varied views of being black female prison employees, by combining intersectionality theory and organisational psychodynamics to explore the psychosocial experience of this group of staff. Their perspective as gendered and racialised subjects provides an insightful account of what it 'feels' like to be black, women, and employees in the British Prison Service.

Intersectionality highlights the ways in which gender and race are socially constructed categories that interact and influence relational dynamics at the individual, group, and organisational level. Through the multiple, and sometimes complicated, intersections of race, gender, employee status and hierarchy, my analysis exposes organisational and interactional dimensions of power, privilege and oppression prevalent in participants' narratives. An organisational psychodynamic framework was applied to delve beneath the surface of interpersonal relationships and prison culture, to uncover the dynamic forces that block the free expression of gendered and racialised identity, and the acceptance and acknowledgment of difference.

Twenty-four interviews were completed with seventeen participants, seven of whom were interviewed twice. All the participants worked for the British Prison Service. The black women in this study displayed a high level of awareness of their multiple identities and shared their experience, which illuminated how they negotiated the challenges they encountered as a result of their ‘outsider within’ position. The data from this research also revealed a cultural–historical and psychosocial characteristic defined as ‘Strong Black Woman’ that was consciously/unconsciously instigated to overcome adversity and challenges within this occupational space.

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Glossary

Black

I have used the term ‘black’ to refer collectively to all those who are subject to racial categorisation and exclusion from the dominant white majority. It is not my intention to deny the many varieties of the black experience in British prisons or the salience of self-defined ethnicity among such groups; on the contrary, my usage simply reflects the political use of the term.

Black woman

refers to an ethnically diverse group of women prison workers whose origin or descent is African and/or Caribbean and/or Asian. It follows that I am using the concept ‘black women employee’ in an attempt to identify whether, and if so, in what ways racially gendered categories are constructed and given meaning in a specific institutional setting. When referring to other authors who use the popular and ‘official’ term ‘black minority ethnic (BME)’ I use this term in the context of their work for clarity and ease of reference.

BME

Black Minority Ethnic is the terminology usually used in the UK to describe people of non-white descent.

CJS

Criminal Justice Service

Defense mechanism

an unconscious process mobilised to protect an individual or group from anxiety.

Gendered racialisation how meanings attributed to black women’s physical characteristics of ‘female’ and ‘black’ often influences their position as members of the passively constructed and ‘socially excluded’(Yuval-Davis, 2011). I focus on these two characteristics to investigate two linked dynamics. First, how this category ‘fits’ with, and has effects on, the lived experience of those who inhabit this subject position. I am suggesting that ‘black woman’ tends to be conceptualised through a binary position of ‘woman’ equals gender and ‘black’ equals racial.

Identity may be socially, culturally and institutionally assigned, as in the case, for instance, of gender, whereby state institutions, social and cultural practices produce the discourses within which gendered subjectivity is constituted.

MOJ Ministry of Justice

NOMS National Offender Management Service

Phantasy a term used in psychoanalytic schools of thought. It refers to the unconscious phantasy, an imaginative activity which underlies thoughts and feelings.

POELT Prison Officer Entry Level Training

Racism an individual’s discriminatory behaviour and prejudicial attitude toward people of a certain race.

RESPECT

The NOMS Black and Minority Ethnic Staff Support Network.

Subjectivity

refers to the way in which a black woman views her role and sense of herself as a human being, and her sense of her place in the world.

1 Introduction

You don't know me

You violate me mentally when you tell me I am a token of the organisation. You ignore my skills and potential, because you are dazzled by my gendered racialisation.

I enter your organisation as other, because I do not resemble you. I am not male and I am not white. My skin is darker and my hair is nappy, so you view my character with disdain, suspicion and fear.

Strong black woman, that's me. I can overcome your ridicule, ignorance, and isolation. My shield protects me by transferring your fear into anger, which provides inner strength and perseverance.

My finesse and stamina have energised my surroundings.

So you cannot see the pain I feel. You cannot hear my cry because I am silenced by my guilt, that I have allowed you to enter my psyche.

Marcia Thomas

My past experience has impressed upon me questions about what it means and feels like to work in the British Prison Service and why it is difficult to articulate this experience.

The poem above reveals the impact race and gender has had on me as a black woman and the psychic defenses I draw upon to endure the real and phantasised negative experience I have encountered as a Prison Service employee. The poem was written to convey the emotions and ideas relating to being a black woman working in a white male-dominated occupation, which excludes subordinates and discriminates, whether deliberately or unwittingly, against black women employees. The poem symbolises the blurring of the inner and outer worlds and acts as a means to express the fears and anxieties produced

from being an outsider within (Lorde, 1984). 'Outsider within' is a term used by African-Americans to describe the unique social location 'we' as black women find ourselves in as a result of our gendered racialisation, which positions us between groups of unequal power (Hill Collins, 2000). To be an outsider within means we remain on the edges of our occupation because of racism and sexism (Davidson, 1997), while our employment status locates us within the organisation as members of the employee group. Perhaps an explanation of why I felt it was necessary for me to use poetry as a means to communicate my feelings will make this point clearer.

I have worked in various British public and private prisons since 2001, yet at times I encounter feelings of despair, worry and anxiety, because of my gender and race, that are difficult to capture in academic language. I will describe my first encounter at a prison gate. The year was 2001; it was my first day at HMP Futa Toro, a category C male prison in north-west England. (A brief description of prison categorisation will be useful at this point. Prisoners are divided into several categories relating to their age, gender and security classification. Male adult prisoners – those aged 21 and over – are given a security categorisation. Category A, B and C prisons are called 'closed' prisons, whereas category D prisons are called 'open' prisons.) I was dressed formally, but as I approached the staff entrance a prison officer pointed out that the entrance for domestic visitors was to the left. I smiled politely and replied 'I'm a new member of staff'; the astonishment on his face was comical. I then proceeded to enter the staff entrance, gave my name, and showed my ID to the prison officer behind the glass window. I was told, 'I'll call someone from healthcare to collect you, love'. The prison officer on the gate thought I

was a nurse when in fact I was a part-time teacher. Seven years later, on my first day at HMP Swahili, a category B prison in south-east England, I experienced a déjà vu moment; an identical encounter to 2001. On both occasions I felt attacked and humiliated, yet these feelings were denied, repressed and could not be explored. I turned these experiences and the despair and pain into the following questions: why were the assumptions above made? If I was white and male would the same assumptions have been made?

To explore and understand why the British Prison Service as an institution creates and perpetuates an axiomatic image of an employee = white man, and the adverse impact this has on black women requires a critical understanding of a number of elements. These elements include the wider social location and the experience of specific groups, that is, black women, white women, black men, white men, etc; the dynamic interaction that exists between individuals and groups within the organisation; the way in which psychic and social defenses are mobilised; and how this perpetuates tension between staff. This will require an appreciation not only of the individual and his/her intra-psychic functioning, but also of the individual's functioning within the institution as a member of the organisation. It is also important to have an understanding of the organisation itself in respect of its internal culture within which the individual is situated. In an attempt to contribute to this understanding, I will explore the ways in which black women perceive and experience working in the British Prison Service and the impact of their gendered racialisation on these perceptions, experiences and responses to the work environment. In

addition, I also examine how the work environment acts as an active element in the process of gendering and racialising black women.

This thesis is concerned with the psychosocial experience of black women and their occupational positioning within the British Prison Service. The Prison Service is an organisation renowned for its white, male-dominated staff make-up and the negative reputation of institutionalised racism (Narey, 2001). My study aims to examine the relational dynamics created by racial and gender difference and the defenses initiated at the organisational, group and individual level, to avoid the anxiety produced as a result of the presence of a particular type of employee—black woman. In addition, I will endeavour to understand how this can impact on the subjective lived experience of this particular group of staff. To do this, I consider the interplay between the modes of functioning that individuals adopt to cope with the experience of racial and gender difference; the multiple tasks of the organisation; the formal and informal culture of the Prison Service and the tension this creates.

Several intellectual currents shape this thesis and I address them within this study by outlining two complementary, overlapping and sometimes competing perspectives, which together form my theoretical orientation. The perspectives used within this research are organisational psychodynamics and intersectionality theory. Each of the perspectives has different positions, lenses and assumptions within them that are applied to examine the relational dynamics between individuals who are differently positioned as a result of the

hierarchical ordering that results from gendered racialisation. The intersection of race and gender are taken into account to understand the broader patterns of social inequality that characterises the lives of many black women. In addition, an organisational psychodynamics approach has been recognised for illuminating the ways in which organisational culture and ways of working can produce anxiety and related defenses, both to the functioning of individuals and to the functioning of institutions. Ergo, the theories are used as a means to make sense of the structural location and subjective experience of black women workers within the British Prison Service. In doing so, I use black women's accounts of their lived experience and understandings as a means to shed light on the psychosocial experience of this group and thus present an alternative employees' perspective of prison occupation.

To understand the impact of working in prisons, an examination of the function of modern-day prisons in the wider society, as well as looking at the way they function as institutions, will provide the context for exploring how the organisation affects individuals and the way in which individuals impact on the organisation. In the sections which follow, I will set out the role of the organisation in society and within the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) in order to describe the organisational setting in which the study is located. I apply the concept of 'total institutions' to illustrate the distinctive elements of the prison environment and to show how they are essentially oppressive and seek to assert homogeneity and suppress difference. I then relate the notion of 'total institutions' to the concept of social systems in accordance with the

psychodynamics of organisation theory to examine the relationship and interaction between individuals and groups within this organisational space.

1.1 The function of prisons

Prisons have a distinctive role in regulating society's social order (Fitzgerald and Sim, 1979). When individuals break laws that uphold the common good, the conventional wisdom goes that they need to be punished or otherwise taught to be more socially cooperative so they can re-enter the society as rehabilitated citizens (Gelderloos, 2003). This process illustrates how social order is maintained by culture and power. Ben Crewe posits that 'imprisonment is the ultimate sanction of most Western societies, and prisons are a potent symbol of the states' power to punish and its failure to integrate all its citizens into its system of norms' (2007, p. 123). The rise in the prison population indicates the high level of 'social exclusion', especially since a large proportion of those who are imprisoned are those 'who are marginalised in their societies' (Coyle, 2005, p. 20). Therefore prisons are a form of social control used as a means to control those neglected by, and considered redundant to, society (Cohen, 1985).

Prisons are vast spaces in which those who inhabit the space are controlled. That is, people are made into subjects via the mechanisms, processes and the institution. This idea is taken from Michel Foucault's (1975) notion of discipline society. Prison is an institution which serves a similar function to other large institutions, for instance, schools and mental institutions, which are used to control the masses.

1.2 Prisons as an organisation

British prisons form one aspect of the NOMS, which is an Executive Agency of the Ministry of Justice (MOJ). Prisons have emerged as a key component of the Criminal Justice System (CJS) over the past 200 years (Giroux, 2011; Cavadino and Dignan, 1997). The most notable changes in the role of the Prison Service are in its expansion and development from a holding and detention function, to a place in which the prisoner may potentially be transformed by the regimes and routines within (Cavadino and Dignan, 1997). The changes in the role of prisons are a result of the fact that crime is not a universal phenomenon that remains the same at all times. Shifts in the role-conception of prisons as an organisation that has, or attempts to have, an impact on people is related to more than just how crime is conceived. There is also a connection to politics with regard to the electoral prospects of political leaders, and it is a means of social control of minority groups. Prisons are therefore one of the instruments that society uses to prevent and control crime. This is shown in the 2008 *Policy Green Paper* entitled *Prisons with a Purpose*, which stipulated that prisons should reduce crime in three principal ways: by incapacitating offenders; by punishing them and thereby deterring others who would commit crimes; and by rehabilitating offenders (Conservative Party, 2008: p. 27). The Mission Statement of Her Majesty's Prison Service for England and Wales highlights the purpose of prisons as follows:

Her Majesty's Prison Service serves the public by keeping in custody those committed by the courts. Our duty is to look after them with humanity and help them lead law-abiding and useful lives in custody and after release (Ministry of Justice, 2012).

In similar vein, the NOMS Commissioning Intentions, published in 2014, document and highlight the aim of British prisons by stating that they will protect the public, reduce re-offending by delivering the punishment and orders of the courts, and support rehabilitation by helping offenders reform their lives.

These statements all have a similar undertone: they all highlight the multiple functions of prisons: to punish, protect and rehabilitate. More implicitly, these statements also highlight the conflict between the philosophical aspect of the penal system, which is retribution, reduction and restorative justice (Cavadino and Dignan, 1997).

The multiple roles of prisons can lead to tension and cause confusion for the public and, ultimately, problems for the staff who work in this environment. The perceived ineffectiveness of the penal system, victims of crimes feeling neglected, and the public perception of the system as unjust and unfair, may affect how prison employees feel about the service and their role within it.

It is also worth taking into account the social structure of prisons. I am referring here to the organisational culture, the multiple tasks and informal structures between different staff groups. For example, a closer look at the British prison system reveals that racial disparities exist, in that black people are substantially under-represented as employees in many parts of the CJS, particularly in senior levels of employment. Yet they are over-represented as recipients of the process. In relation to the prison population, in 2014, 26 per cent of offenders were from a Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) group – which is significantly higher than the 2.8 per cent of the general population they represent (Prison Reform Trust, 2014). Conversely, the majority of prison staff are white men, which suggests that the dominant group's ideologies dominate the organisation, which in turn perpetuates racial inequality. The Prison Service has a long history of racial discrimination, which resulted in the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) completing a formal investigation in 2003. The report concluded that the Prison Service had committed unlawful racial discrimination by failing to protect prisoners and staff from racist abuse (Chakraborti and Phillips, 2013; Commission for Racial Equality, 2003b).

The disparity in the racial make-up of prisoners and staff may tell us something about inter-group and organisational dynamics. Studies by Kimmett Edgar (2010), Kimmett Edgar and Carol Martin (2004) and HMIP (2004) have examined the experience and perceptions of BME prisoners and staff in relation to race relations in prisons. These studies highlighted that prisons are racialised spaces. Authors such as Nicholas de Viggiani's (2003) and Don Sabo et al. (2001) have also shown that prisons are gendered in that the majority of prisoners are men and the majority of prison staff are men. I put

forward the idea that prisons are gendered and racial organisations, and this may influence public perceptions of the institution because the public may form a view of the type of people who work in prisons based on gender and racial stereotypes. There may also be some overlapping with the three tasks of prisons, for example, the task to protect and punish may be associated with more masculine ideologies, whereas rehabilitation may be deemed to be more of a nurturing role.

This may create symbolic resonance for prison employees and the general public with labyrinthine chains of meanings (Duncan, 1999), derived from conscious and unconscious associations to crime and punishment. Prison employees join the service with preconceived ideas of the role of prisons based on the main justifications of the penal system. This may result in them joining the service with anxieties about the role of prisons and their feelings associated with punishment and rehabilitation. Amy Lerman and Joshua Page (2012), referring to the correctional services in the US, found that there was a lack of understanding of prison employees' feelings towards their work. This view can be translated into the British context because British prisons in general may be considered as a closed milieu with very structured working practices, which may be viewed differently both by individuals and groups.

It is therefore important to examine the conscious and unconscious methods prison employees use to alleviate the anxiety produced in response to the multiple tasks of prisons and gender and racial difference. Given the organisational differentiation of

groups of employees into operational and non-operational staff (the two main staff groups), there may be an expectation that different staff groups share a collective attitude towards the work they complete, though this may not be the case. Furthermore, the differentiation between operational and non-operational staff may be overlaid by social differentiation of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, etc. Consequently, when prison staff groups comprise individuals from different racial and gender backgrounds, this may create different perceptions of the role of prisons and generate different experiences. Basically, race and gender becomes the key meaning-making device that generates expectations and explanations. These differences may activate a range of defensive mechanisms, such as projection, introjection, splitting, and projective identification (Obholzer and Roberts, 1994; Klein, 1932, 1946) to overcome the anxiety experienced by staff within the organisation.

1.3 Social systems

The idea of social systems can be used to understand how prisons function as a 'total institution'. 'Total institution' is a term taken from Erving Goffman, who defines a 'total institution' as:

A place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time together and lead an enclosed formally administered round of life (1968, p. 11).

Prisons are 'total institutions' because their total character is symbolised by the barrier which separates the outside and inside environment shown by the high walls and barbed wires. They are distinctive environments because they have their own social norms, culture and way of operating. The main dimensions of the term 'total institution' are described by Goffman as follows:

First, all aspects of life are conducted in the same place and under the same single authority. Second, each phase of the member's daily activity is carried out in the immediate company of a large batch of others, all of whom are treated alike and required to do the same things together. Third, all phases of the day's activities are tightly scheduled with one activity leading at a pre-arranged time into the next, the whole sequence of events being imposed from above by a system of explicit, formal rulings and a body of officials. Finally the various enforced activities are brought together into a single rational plan purportedly designed to fulfil the official aims of the institution (1968, p. 17).

Goffman's quote points out the close proximity in which people function in a compact space separated from the outside world. The key point here is that everything is tightly controlled and ordered. This may create tension and a split between the groups of people who inhabit this space. In prisons the two main groups which exist are the prisoners and the staff. The concept of 'total institution' is used here to analyse the formal organisation and the social structures which are used to integrate staff and prisoners' worlds into a functional social system.

I now want to link Goffman's notion of 'total institutions' to a systems psychodynamics perspective. In doing so, I will examine the impact of psychic and organisational functioning that are underlaid with gender and racial undertones. To do this, I consider the interplay between the modes of functioning that people adopt to cope with the experience of working in prisons. Taking an organisational psychodynamics approach similar to other researchers, such as David Armstrong (2005), Anton Obzholer and Vega Zagier Roberts (1994), Eric Miller and A. K. Rice (1967), Isabel Menzies-Lyth (1960) and Elliott Jacques (1955) will enable me to explore the impact of organisational arrangements on anxieties and phantasies of the individuals who work in prisons and gain an insight into the defensive mechanisms they utilise to cope with them, which is conveyed in the notion of 'total institutions'.

Prisons can be further described as complex systems because they have many elements which affect the institution. In order for prisons to function effectively and maintain order and control, they operate a high degree of internal control mechanisms (Pabjan, 2005; Sparks and Bottoms, 1995; Sykes, 1958), while maintaining a connection with the outside environment through their inter-related functions in the CJS. In addition, a centralised bureaucracy organises and administers the service which impacts on the day-to-day life of each prison (Fitzgerald and Sim, 1979).

According to Gresham Sykes (1958), social order in prisons is negotiated and involves the cooperation of prisoners and staff, which enables both groups to create an environment that is tolerable. To maintain order prison staff must be able to maintain control, which is referred to as 'orderliness' within prisons (Morgan, 1992). Routine tasks form part of the social structure of prisons. They act as a means to assert prison staff authority as expressed in the ability to control the lives of prisoners. Richard Sparks et al. state that 'for the staff they are principally about sustaining the routine operation of the organisation' (1996, p. 51).

In *The Society of Captives*, Sykes (1958) describes prisons as institutions which generate unique patterns of relationships and activities. Sparks et al. cite Sykes' analysis of prisons when they claim that Sykes 'views prisons as "the society of captives" as a "system of action" (Sykes, 1958, p. 79), rather sharply bounded by the prison wall, and marked by its own conventions and codes of conduct' (Sparks et al., 1996, p. 38).

From my observations of prisons I agree with the above assertion. Sykes is referring to prisoners as opposed to prison staff. However, I use his principle as a starting point to examine how prison employees, who follow and view codes of conduct and systems of work in different, but nevertheless profound, ways, are as subject to the protocols of practice as are prisoners. Hence, staff are also part of the 'total institution' and its social system. They move in and out of it as they go to and from work. This idea can help us to think about the way prison staff interact with each other to fulfil prison work. Elaine Crawley and Peter Crawley postulate that prisons have a distinct:

‘Occupational culture’ – and the social interactions which inevitably result is a significant component of the job itself. In the prison, how things are done can be as important as what is done, and occupational (that is, informal) rules and norms underpin how officers relate to their inmates, to each other, to their superiors on the wing and to their managers (2008, p. 134).

This idea is particularly relevant to my study because I have an interest in the relations between individuals and groups of Prison Service employees, specifically black women and their colleagues who are differentiated by race, gender and organisational position.

1.4 The gap in the literature

There are many factors which affect black women’s psychosocial experience of being a Prison Service employee. However, there has been a lack of attention paid to this group of staff, perhaps because the Prison Service is dominated by white men. The almost exclusive research that focuses on racial difference (HMIP, 2005b; Edgar and Martin, 2004) and studies which focus on gender difference within prisons (Tewksbury, 2006; Clayton, 1995; Zimmer, 1986) have tended to highlight issues around racism, sexual harassment, and comparative studies depicting difference in perceptions between different groups. It is important to note that these studies have separated race and gender as separate categories, which renders black women invisible because their experiences are influenced by the intersection of race and gender. This indicates that black women are

on the margins and 'not worthy of study'. It also creates a strange paradox for black women in the prison context because their physical characteristics such as skin colour, hair and features make them highly visible within the predominantly white male occupational setting, yet in terms of representation and importance as employees in prison occupation literature they are often rendered invisible.

1.5 Research focus and structure of the thesis

The focal points of this study will be: (1) the process in which black women are acculturated into the world of prison employee; (2) the participants' perception of themselves and their relationship dynamics with others within the organisation; (3) the participants' negotiation of the organisational dynamics; (4) the mobilisation and impact of psychosocial defenses on black women.

The thesis begins in Chapter 2 with a review of three bodies of literature. The first section of the literature review discusses prisons in the wider context of society, looking at prison reform during the last two decades, as well as the multiple tasks of prisons. The discussions indicate that society's perception of prisons, their roles and the type of people who work there may create tension for employees, which can lead to anxiety and conflict between different groups of staff.

The second body of literature I review examines the two main prison staff groups: operational and non-operational. By describing the status and structural location of different staff groups, this will provide an insight into the relational dynamics between the groups. The discussion aims to set the foundation for later explorations into the way in which gender and racial difference affects the relational dynamics between different groups of staff.

The third body of literature scrutinises prominent British prison occupational literature. I discuss the approach taken by these scholars who tend to ascribe simple categories of gender – male/female or race – black/white to their participants. I first want to demonstrate how the unique experience of black women as gendered and raced employees is missing from these studies and, as a consequence, how stereotypical images of prison employees are portrayed. I also want to show how these stereotypes influence the way black women prison employees are seen and treated, thus showing how stereotypes are in fact active elements of prison life. This exemplifies the experience and axiomatic image of a white male prison officer and leads to tension and disruption when an employee who does not ‘fit’ the axiomatic image of prison employee enters the organisation. By focusing on the experience of black women, an understanding of how gender and race creates a unique psychosocial experience for this group of employees will be gained.

Chapter 3 provides an account of the epistemological and methodological stance of this research. I employ interview methods to document the participants' voice and experience in the British Prison Service context. I also explain how I applied an 'ethnographic eye' to visualise and imagine the situations participants described. In addition, I used secondary resources to support my analytical claims when analysing participants' accounts. This chapter provides a detailed description of the process of selecting participants, as well as presenting and discussing my material and process of analysis. I also discuss the limitations of the thesis.

Chapters 4 and 5 discuss the central concepts of the thesis. In chapter 4 I present the theoretical framework and provide an overview of intersectionality and standpoint theory. I briefly present the historical emergence of these concepts and thereafter describe the role of both theories in this thesis. I then outline the second theoretical framework which underpins this thesis. I describe the genesis of organisational psychodynamics, a psychoanalytically informed set of theories, with a strong orientation towards the ideas of David Armstrong (2005), Isabel Menzies-Lyth (1988), Wilfred Bion (1961) and Melanie Klein (1932, 1946). I conclude the theory chapters by discussing the importance of combining intersectionality and organisational psychodynamics to gain a deeper understanding of the psychosocial experience of black women Prison Service employees.

The data chapters integrate intersectionality theory and organisational psychodynamics into a single conceptual framework, which aims to illustrate how the inner psychological

world of individuals relates to the organisational systems in which they are working (Miller, 1993), and, more specifically, how the emotional needs of individuals and groups shape, and are shaped, by the processes, structures, and culture of the social systems in which those individuals and groups are situated (Petriglieri and Petriglieri, 2010; Krantz, 2001; Miller, 1989).

In Chapter 6, I examine prison culture. I start my analysis of the data from the position that prison environments have a complex culture with distinctive practices, procedures and traditions which are drawn out from the narratives of three participants, Trina and Rosa, both prison officers, and Raisa, a teacher. Each participant's story provides an insight into an aspect of prison culture which I assert is made up of three distinctive elements: suspicion, mistrust and violence. I explore how these elements form part of the social structure and how they act as social defenses to protect against the anxiety produced in response to gender and racial difference.

In Chapter 7 I examine extracts from Rosa, a prison officer, and Ella, a Temporary Senior Prison Officer (TSPO). I focus on a specific period in their prison career: their transition from Prison Officer Entry Level Training (POELT) to prison officer. I introduce the notion of carceral space (defined in detail in Chapter 7) to analyse Rosa's time at the POELT residential college. I then focus on one specific aspect of prison practice – control and restraint (C&R) – to look at how the participants engage and perceive this particular practice from the position of gendered-racialised subjects.

In Chapter 8 I focus on the story of Lisa, a Diversity Manager. I apply Ronald Britton's (2004) notion of 'triangulation' to explore the interrelationship between Lisa and her two white female senior managers. I focus specifically on how racialised, gendered, seniority and organisational dynamics construct a specific identity and organisational positioning for this participant.

In Chapter 9 I show how the undercurrent of racial and gender difference is prominent when Lorna White is employed as a senior manager at Songhai Empire. I examine her account of an incident which involved her and a group of senior managers through an organisational psychodynamic lens, drawing specifically on Wilfred Bion's (1961) theory of groups.

In Chapter 10 I present my theoretical contribution by introducing the notion of 'Strong Black Woman' (SBW), a concept in which I bring together the social aspect of the term, that is, that SBW is a social construct derived from a distinct cultural history with specific characteristic traits with organisational psychodynamics, to illustrate how the SBW ideology acts as a defense mechanism applied by black women to overcome adversity and challenges within a specific occupational space.

Chapter 11 explores issues in relation to being a black female researcher-practitioner. I reflect on my multiple identities and their impact on the fieldwork, the dilemmas which occurred, and the challenge of writing a black feminist research thesis part-time.

I conclude the thesis with a discussion about my study and findings, showing how this perspective adds to current prison occupational literature. I also demonstrate the originality of my approach in understanding the experience of gendered and racialised subjects, and show that rich sources of data can be collected when a researcher combines two distinctive theoretical frameworks such as intersectionality and organisational psychodynamics theory. In particular, I discuss how this framework may help us develop an appreciation of the relational dynamics which occur as a result of gender and race, as well as the impact of the unconscious which affects organisational psychodynamics within the British Prison Service. I also complete a final review by discussing the themes from the data chapter and end by suggesting areas for further research.

2 Literature Review

Like any research project, this project is embedded within a wider research context. The academic and policy literature on prisons is relatively wide-ranging. Areas of interest have included the composition of the penal population (Prison Reform Trust, 2010); prisoner treatment (The Howard League for Penal Reform, 2011; Wilson, 2004; Solomon and Edgar, 2003); prisoner experience (Phillips, 2012; Liebling et al., 2011; Rowe, 2011); prison culture (Sparks et al., 1996; Clemmer, 1958); and rehabilitation of prisoners (Ministry of Justice, 2010). Other studies have examined the organisation of the penitentiary (Coyle, 2009; Sim, 2006; Sykes, 1958). Where experience of prison culture and practice is concerned, these studies tend to focus on the prisoner perspective with regards to the penal system. However, there are only a limited amount of studies that have focused on prison officer culture (Kauffman, 1988), or prison staff experience (Crawley and Crawley, 2008; Liebling and Price, 2001; Thomas, 1972). Other studies have applied comparative methodologies to examine prison staff experience by gender – male/female (Tewksbury, 2006; Zimmer, 1986; Jurik, 1985) or race – black/white (Singh-Bhui, 2008; HMIP, 2004).

The aim of the literature review is to document how prison occupational literature has addressed the daily negotiation of race, organisational culture and masculinity in prisons. I shall map various fields of literature, research and policy that are relevant to my enquiry. I shall also identify gaps, absences and inadequacies of the field and discuss how

I intend to contribute to an under-researched area of prison occupational literature. I begin with a review of prison reform in the UK in order to set the scene of the organisation and to illustrate the impact of prison reform on prison staff experience. I provide an overview of prison staff groups and discuss how tension and conflict may arise between the groups. I also examine prison occupational literature and studies and discuss the limitations of these studies to illustrate the gaps in prison employee research, which depicts a particular archetype employee: white male as 'norm'. My first main discussion point will endeavour to illustrate how black women's unique experience is overshadowed by race relations discourse, which is dominated by black men's experience of discriminatory practices (Singh-Bhui, 2008; HMIP, 2005b). I then discuss the way in which gender studies generally obscure black women's experience because white women's encounters with sexual harassment and gender-biased assumptions and practices (Crewe, 2006; Britton, 2003; Zimmer, 1986) tend to be the focal point. These studies do not make it clear whether black women are included in the sample.

Furthermore, if black women were included in these studies, the methodology of such studies would obscure the actual experience of black women. For this reason, they do not take into account the possibility that black women's emotional and structural relationship with the Prison Service might be affected by a combination of their gender and their race. Loraine Gelsthorpe (2006) supports this view; although her work examined the experience of female ethnic minority offenders, her observations may be applied to black women employees. She asserts:

[There is] a general failure to consider both race and gender issues in the same piece of research or set of statistics, and [...] a general failure to clarify concepts and categories of ethnicity (2006, p. 100).

The final point I aim to show is the way prison literature tends to portray participants from minority groups as powerless victims of racism or sexism in racial discrimination, race relations and gender studies.

2.1 Prison reform

A discussion about the psychosocial experience of black women working in the British Prison Service is incomplete without considering prison reform and the impact it has on the people working in this occupation. In this section I provide an overview of penal reform since the 1990s as the 1990s was a significant period in the history of British prisons. I then discuss the challenges and tensions produced by different governments' strategies to reform the penal service and reduce prison costs, and the fluctuation in the prison population.

The Strangeways riot began on 1 April 1990 and lasted for 25 days. The riot triggered a wave of revolt in over 20 other prisons across the country and led to major reforms to the British penal system. Lord Woolf's (1991) investigation into the Strangeways riot reported that a failure of successive governments to provide resources to the Prison Service in response to the increase in the prison population was the main cause of the

disturbance. He further warned in the report that the prison population would double from 44,000 to 83,000 by 2008, allowing for contemporary trends and changes to Government policy. Based on current prison trends, Lord Woolf's predictions were correct because the prison population in 2014 was over 84,000.

The demand for more prison places has also seen an expansion in the number of private prisons. In May 1992, HMP Wolds opened as the first privately run prison in England and Wales. Today, 14 out of 131 prisons in England and Wales are private or contracted out (Tanner, 2013). In 2010, the Justice Secretary Kenneth Clarke, advocated an increase in the number of private prisons, arguing that private prisons were cheaper than their public sector equivalents (Cardwell, 2012); however, there are many debates as to whether there has been a reduction in the actual spending. Furthermore, the Ministry of Justice's 2010 Green Paper, *Breaking the Cycle*, designed to reduce expanding prison populations and curb spending, has resulted in the NOMS instructing prison governors to cut budgets by £149m a year, £2,200 per prison place in response to the austerity measures that have been introduced across public sector organisations.

At the end of 2012, the Government announced its decision to abolish whole prison contracting to private companies. Whole prison contracting involved public and private sector prisons bidding in competition for the contract to manage and run prisons. The Government introduced a 'new approach', limiting competition to rehabilitation and

ancillary services, such as healthcare and prisoner education, and introduced an 'efficiency benchmark' for Public Sector prisons (Tanner, 2013).

In spite of prison reform, the prison population remains high. This has placed increased pressure on the people who work in prisons. The Criminal Justice Alliance (2012) report supports this view by stating:

Overcrowding can place enormous burdens on staff, who may be overstretched as they try to maintain a safe and rehabilitative prison environment. Inadequate resources for the number of offenders detained can exacerbate levels of frustration and tension by prisoners, leading to higher risks of violence (2012, p. 10).

According to an article published by Sarah Scott in the *North East News* in 2012, violent assaults in prisons have increased as a result of prison reform and a reduction in prison staff. This has included attacks on prison staff as well as prisoner-on-prisoner assaults.

In general then, prison reform has seen a rise in private sector involvement in prisons, a rising prison population, and increased cuts to the budget which produce additional pressures for prison staff, leading to a decline in staff morale (James et al., 1997). These pressures can also increase anxiety, which results from the tension created by conflicting impulses. For example, budget cuts have resulted in a reduction of staff and the curtailing of the prison regime (The Criminal Justice Alliance, 2012), which results in prisoners

spending more time in their cells. These changes may cause tension because established practices and procedures, formed over the years, may change as a result of a reduction in staffing levels and budget cuts, and may undermine staff–prisoner relationships and the ability to run legitimate regimes (Liebling et al., 2011). This is an important point because specific structures, procedures and practices give meaning to prison life. When changes are made to established structures, it may lead to fear which may be both imagined and a reality.

The dearth of studies that examine the tension and anxiety experienced by prison staff is surprising. It means there is a restricted amount of analysis of the role of different prison staff, different staff group cultures, and the diversity of prison staff experience (Liebling et al., 2011a; Liebling et al., 2011b; Jefferson, 2007; Crawley, 2004a; Sparks et al., 1996; Kauffman, 1988). Over the years, British prison officers have attracted academic interest by researchers such as Jamie Bennett et al. (2008); Elaine Crawley and Peter Crawley (2008); Alison Liebling (2000); and James Thomas (1972) However, their studies have tended to ignore the impact of the psychosocial element of prison work.

A lot of studies document the sociology of prisons from the perspective of male offenders (Rowe, 2011; Bosworth and Carrabine, 2001; Hughes, 2000). It is further argued that the social structure of prisons, which is designed for and by men, systematically disadvantages black/white female offenders and black/white female employees. There is also limited research on the standpoint of female prison employees. A study

commissioned by the Fawcett Society (2006) investigated the experience of women in the CJS. They found that there was a relationship between the treatment of women working in the system and the experience of female victims, suspects and offenders. These findings are interesting because they imply that shared experience between individuals, who are marginalised because of their gender and race, is a more significant factor than the difference in status between prisoner and staff. Despite the Fawcett Society's (2006) study, however, there are limited studies in the UK that examine the impact of prison reform on employees from the perspective of black/white women, even though this approach may provide a rich source of information about the sociology of prisons from the viewpoint of employees.

The richness of information that can be obtained from research which examines the viewpoint of members from marginalised groups, such as black/white women and across different criminal justice occupations is illustrated by Susan Martin and Nancy Jurik's (1996) study completed in the US. They examined three criminal justice occupations: police, prisons and the legal profession. They examined the organisation of these occupations along gender lines and compared and contrasted the women's experience across the different agencies. What is of relevance here, which I relate to my study, is that the number of women entering these organisations has increased, yet women are still not completely integrated into the police service, legal services and prisons. A possible reason for their continued marginalisation might be that women's presence threatens the definition of the work, occupational culture, and self-image of the white male employee. Furthermore, those women who remain in these organisations encounter obstacles that

limit their advancement opportunities and confine them to gender stereotyped tasks. Martin and Jurik's study focused on the following issues: what the roles of women in these professions were in the past, and how they have changed; what barriers women have encountered at the interpersonal, organisational, occupational and societal levels in these justice occupations; how women have performed and how they have responded to barriers they have encountered; and, finally, what effect women have had on the wider justice system, on victims, offenders, co-workers and the public. The study comprised a diverse participant group, for example, profession, ethnicity, etc.; thus reference is made to the diversity of experience between the participants. What is missing from this study, however, is an in-depth analysis of the impact of the intersection of race and gender. I am referring to the difference in experience between white women and black women as a result of the intersection of race and gender.

2.2 Prison staff groups

At the end of 2011/12, there were 45,576 staff in post within the NOMS, 42,779 based within prison establishments and 2,797 in NOMS HQ. The statistics showed that there were 1,214 black women, 15,761 white women, 1,835 black men, and 28,541 white men. The British Prison Service staff gender and racial make-up is very low in comparison to the US correctional services, which have seen a dramatic increase in the number of black women, black men, and white women joining the correctional services (Hemmens et al., 2002).

The majority of the NOMS employees work in prisons. The staff who work in prisons do so for 'a variety of reasons with a variety of intentions' (West, 1997, p. 43). For example, there are a significant number of prison officers with military backgrounds (Liebling et al., 2011b) who are attracted to the service because of the regimental style of prison regimes and the uniformity and rigid order of the institution. Some staff join because they feel passionate about reducing the re-offending aspect of the work (Millington, 2001). Different reasons for joining the Prison Service may inadvertently affect the relational dynamics between different staff groups. For example, prison staff who are more concerned with rehabilitation may be perceived by staff who are more in favour of harsher prison regimes as problematic.

Prison Service employees fall into two main categories: operational staff and non-operational staff. It is important to distinguish between the groups of staff to illustrate the complexity of the inter-relationship between staff groups which is enmeshed with gender and racial constellations. A description of the two main staff groups will give an indication of how these groups interact and work together as they aim to meet the Prison Service objectives. In addition, it will also illustrate the tensions that may occur when both groups' roles are blurred or when one group is deemed to be less significant than the other.

2.3 Operational staff

Operational staff form by far the largest group of staff in any prison, with prison officers being the largest subgroup. The operational label is ascribed to prison staff who wear a distinctive prison officer uniform: black trousers and a white shirt. The differences in grades are depicted by the number of stripes on a person's epaulette. Senior grades do not wear uniforms. There are four distinct operational staff groups that comprise various roles and carry various responsibilities within them. There are Governing Governors, Operational Managers (G-E grade), Principal Officers (PO), Senior Officers (SO), prison officers, and officer support grades. In order for operational staff to progress through the operational line they have to undertake assessments at each stage; successful completion results in promotion to the next grade. Mike Vuolo and Candace Kruttschnitt argue that prison officers 'are one of the primary actors in the penal system and the individuals who are directly responsible for implementing new penal policies' (2008, p. 309). The primary duty of prison officers is to maintain order and carry out discipline roles. Prison officers undertake a period of entry level training (POELT), which is an extensive training scheme during their probation period. This training involves coursework, a residential period at the Prison Service College, and on-the-job training. The purpose of such training is to ensure that on completion prison officers are competent to carry out a range of prison officer duties. However, Susan Holmes and Douglas MacInnes's (2003) findings have revealed that the training has been inadequate and has contributed significantly to the development of stress, which has reduced prison officers' confidence in dealing with the many traumatic situations they encounter. This suggests that prison officer training may not be effective in preparing prison officers for the day-to-day emotional life of prisons (Crawley, 2004b), but rather has inadvertently embed social

defenses – a set of organisationally designed and ascribed mechanisms to avoid the pain created by anxiety (Hinshelwood, 1989; Menzies Lyth, 1988; Jacques, 1955), which act as a means to avoid the anxiety produced by the nature of prison work. Hence, the inadequacy of prison officer training may exacerbate the psychosocial experience of operational staff, which may create additional internal and external pressures.

The pressures faced by prison officers may also be attributed to the changes in their role. Their multiple roles reflect the contradictory axis between the main tasks of prisons: to punish, protect and rehabilitate. The literature has shown that the role of the prison officer has developed over the last century as prisons have taken on the additional role of rehabilitation (Coyle, 2005; Thomas, 1972). In addition to prison officers' tasks of controlling prisoners, minimising the risk of escape, and ensuring that there is always good order (Coyle, 2005), they are also required to deliver additional care and support to prisoners. Similar changes have been documented in the US. Craig Hemmens and Mary Stohr's (2000) study, completed in the US, highlights these changes by asserting that correctional officers are required to go far beyond security functions and adopt more of a social service role with treatment overtones.

2.4 Non-operational staff

Non-operational staff are recruited to work in specialist roles. For example, they work as Managers (G-A); Executive Officers; Administration Officers; teachers, nurses, psychologists etc., employed to provide specific services and generally acquire their

training prior to gaining employment in the Prison Service. These groups of staff tend to be located in specific places inside prisons, and their roles are perceived as 'soft' work on account of the limited interaction, if any, with prisoners.

Brett Garland et al. (2009) assert non-operational staff contribute to institutional security, yet their prison training is very limited, as they receive only one to five days prison induction at the start of their employment. This raises the question of the value placed on non-operational staff roles and the perceived contribution made by this group. Indeed, it also generates conflict between operational staff and non-operational staff with regard to progression opportunities and the relational dynamics between them. Statistics obtained from the NOMS in 2010 provide a breakdown by race and gender of staff. The statistics showed that black women (859) predominately worked in non-operational roles. It is important to bear this fact in mind because, in addition to the tension generated by the structured division between operational and non-operational staff, inequalities linked to gender difference also occur. In 1997, the Prison Service Job Evaluation Scheme (JES) found that predominantly females working in non-operational roles, such as administration, had job evaluation scores comparable to those of the predominantly male prison uniform grades, although they were paid considerably less. In January 1999, the Public Commercial Services union (PCS) lodged equal pay cases, as a result of the evidence of sex discrimination, amounting to over 3,000 cases. In January 2005 the Prison Service accepted the petition put forward by the PCS union to increase non-operational grade staff's pay.

2.5 Tension between operational and non-operational staff

Conflict may exist between both operational and non-operational staff (Millington, 2001). Both staff groups may feel devalued and underappreciated. James Thomas referred to the tension between staff as 'crystallising a conflict' (1972, p. 162). Thomas focused on the perspective of prison officers when he argued that the division between staff groups occurred as a result of prison officers feeling undervalued as prisons recruited more and more specialists to deliver specific services. This feeling was echoed by The House of Commons (2009) report that stipulated:

They [prison officers] lack confidence in the value of what they do. They harbour a deep sense of frustration that the effort which they are devoting to the Service is not appreciated (2009, p. 13).

Another angle that might be taken here is that operational staff may feel that non-operational staff who are employed as specialists may be better qualified because they have academic qualifications. This may produce envy.

Despite such rivalry, it is evident that both non-operational and operational staff may feel undervalued (Millington, 2001). This could be related to the contradictory tasks of prisons, that is, operational staff's predominant role is to maintain security and order in accordance with the first two objectives of the Prison Service Mission Statement: punish

and protect; whereas non-operational staff complete work around rehabilitation and administration tasks, which is in line with the third objective: rehabilitate. Therefore their organisational status embodies the structural tensions inherent in the system. However, as mentioned above, operational staff roles have taken on a more rehabilitative remit which has blurred the lines between the two staff groups. This may have created additional tension and conflict between operational and non-operational staff.

The issues around tension and conflict between operational and non-operational staff are pertinent to my study because they provide an insight into what happens when individuals become members of a group and subsequently embody the group's ideals. This leads to the formation of group identity which is related to the different roles of prisons; the different duties operational and non-operational staff complete; the perception of prisons by individuals inside and outside the institution; and other psychodynamics that are played out. All these elements have a significant impact on organisational life (Kets de Vries, 2003).

The division between the two main staff groups and their role and responsibilities for specific aspects of prison life may produce anxiety. This in turn may initiate social defenses that permeate the structures of the Prison Service. Understanding the impact of social defenses on the daily practices of prisons and the experience of individuals, is worth investigating because it can tell us something about the relational dynamics

between groups and individuals who work in this environment. This tends to be missing from prison research.

The process of racialisation and genderisation in prisons, and, in particular how this creates a specific subject position for a group of employees whose psychosocial experience is influenced by the intersection of race and gender, is also absent from prison literature. In order to understand the psychosocial experience of black women employees, it is important to pay attention to the internal and social dynamics such as race and gender, alongside the relational dynamics between operational and non-operational staff. I am suggesting that conflict between operational and non-operational staff may in fact be overlaid by gender and race-related conflict. As black women work in both operational and non-operational roles, they may have different experiences to their white male/female and black male counterparts as a result of gender and racial inequalities that are mutually constitutive, and thus it might be argued that black women working in either staff group may not only encounter tension because of their membership to a particular staff group but also because of the intersection of race and gender. This is a pertinent point and is supported by British scholars such as Gail Lewis (2000); Marilyn Davidson (1997); Heidi Mirza (1997); Amina Mama (1995), as well as American scholars such as Patricia Hill Collins (2000); Davidson (1992); Stella Nkomo and Taylor Cox (1989); and bell hooks (1981). They have argued that black women experience racial and gender discrimination in all aspects of their lives, including the workplace.

2.6 Prison culture and the impact on staff attitude and perceptions

Organisational culture is a theme which is an undercurrent throughout the thesis and within the overarching theoretical analytical frame, because prisons are complex and total institutions, made up of different people in close proximity to each other in specific positions, for instance, prisoners, operational staff, and non-operational staff. With regard to the staff groups, they have specific duties and responsibilities to ensure the multiple tasks of prisons are completed. Hence prisons as organisations are responding constantly to both internal and external demands and pressures linked to prison reform, while interacting with the complexities of the organisational structure, procedures and practices.

Scott Camp and Neal Langan's (2005) study, completed in the US, considered how perceptions of minority and white staff working in correctional services differed when rating their own opportunities for job promotion, opportunities of minority staff, and women. They found that the gap in how job opportunities were evaluated between men and women and between blacks and whites did not vary significantly. However, whites and all men believed that minorities and women had greater opportunities for job advancement. The study, however, found no evidence to substantiate this claim. This suggests that misguided perceptions can lead to unfair judgements that may create tension between staff.

While offering some interesting and important data on the differential perceptions of prison staff, Camp and Langan's study subtly illustrates how black women are made invisible in prison occupation research. I am referring here to the fact that there is no

clear indication of the group in which black women are located in for the purpose of their study. The black female participants may have been included in the 'women' group or the 'minority' group. The concealing of black women employees' experience in ascribed categories of 'woman' and 'minority' is common because there is a 'tendency for researchers to treat race and gender as mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis' (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 40). Therefore black women employees appear to be theoretically erased from prison occupation literature and, as a consequence, their experience as a result of the intersection of race and gender has not been explored. Hence, the lack of attention paid to this group may have an effect on the way white prison employees and the wider public view black women as prison employees in general. For example, there may be an assumption that they work in particular roles, or there may be a view that black women do not work in prisons at all. Indeed, the omission of black women's experience exposes the interactions and reinforcement of racism and patriarchy within the British Prison Service.

2.7 Race and prisons

According to the British Prison Service staff in post data, produced in March 2013, there were 2,677 staff recorded as BME, out of 45,576 staff. The NOMS Equalities Annual Report 2014 recorded a decrease in the number of BME staff employed, in comparison to the previous year. However, as the data does not differentiate between black women and black men, inference cannot be made as to whether the decrease affects black men and black women equally.

An earlier study completed by Robin Alfred (1992) examined the recruitment, retention and experience of black workers in the British Prison Service. He outlined concerns about the reported isolation experienced by black staff and recognised that more needed to be done with regard to improving their work experience. A more detailed investigation into black employees' experience was not completed, illustrating a possible avoidance of addressing the underlying reasons for black employees' negative experience.

It is worth noting that there is even less literature that documents the specific experiences of black *women* working in the British Prison Service. For example, Singh-Bhui (2008) examined the findings from the HMIP (2005b) *Thematic Study on Race Issues in British Prisons*, but makes no reference to the fact that there was no distinction between black female and black male staff's view of race relations in the study. There are studies, however, which focus specifically on black female *prisoners*' experience (Cheliotis and Liebling, 2006; Leonidas et al., 2005), quite possibly because black people in general are over-represented as prisoners, and this raises the question of power and justice in the Prison Service.

Hindpal Singh-Bhui's (2006) study examined the issues of power and justice from an anti-racist position. He found that the approach taken by the NOMS failed to take into consideration the individual and organisational characteristics that have influenced the respective identities of the Prison and Probation Service. The study further reported that

the NOMS had implemented robust mechanisms to tackle racism; however, the procedures were ineffective in improving race relations across the organisation, but rather created a shift from overt racism to covert racism (HMIP, 2005b). This is an example of how structural power within prisons was utilised in a subtle manner to generate policies and practices resulting in the perpetuation of institutionalised racism. It further highlights the issues relating to control of decisions, practices and procedures, the conduct of senior managers and the culture of the organisation. Singh-Bhui asserts:

While there is much humanity amongst people working in prisons, the Prison Service task does not stress the uniqueness of the individual, but instead the importance of security and the effective management of prisoners. It encourages suspicion, defensiveness and division, in some respects appropriately. Anti-racist practice is, to a degree, tied up with recognition of individuality, of the diversity of people, something actively discouraged in institutions designed to maintain order (2006, p. 176).

Singh-Bhui's assertion highlights the opposing force and conflict at play. I am referring to the organisation's drive to improve race relations and the interplay between the existing social structures and internal psychic processes that may inadvertently affect employees from minority groups.

Another example of the way in which the structure of prisons perpetuates racial oppression can be drawn from Kimmett Edgar and Carol Martin's (2004) findings from their research in four local British prisons, with 73 minority ethnic male prisoners and 53 prison officers, three of which were described as BME. They investigated situations such as enforcing discipline, which is part of prison officers' duties. Consciously, this duty may be perceived as being undertaken in a fair and objective manner, but unconsciously the decision may be influenced by racial prejudice and expressed through body language, which the prison officer may not be aware of. These internal unconscious conflicts may have been present between prison officers and ethnic minority prisoners, which created conflict between them. This can explain the claim put forward by ethnic minority prisoners who stated that the enforcement of discipline had racial elements. The study further revealed how perceptions of racial difference influence prison officers and minority ethnic prisoners' interactions.

Another study which examined the perceptions of BME staff and prisoners was completed by the HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP, 2005). They conducted a thematic review which included interviews with 178 prison staff, mainly prison officers in prisoner contact roles, of whom 58 (34 per cent) identified themselves as BME. A high proportion of BME staff (38: 66 per cent) interviewed reported they had experienced racism, half of which (24: 41 per cent) said they had experienced racism from colleagues. Two-thirds of BME staff felt that institutional racism was a problem in their workplace, with 15 per cent feeling that the problem was severe. These findings support the argument that prison staff culture is racialised. It also highlights the possibility of a culture of suspicion and

mistrust amongst staff groups in response to racial difference. Unfortunately, as the sample staff group was not categorised by gender, it is difficult to ascertain whether there is a difference in perception between black women and black men. This observation provides the basis for my argument in relation to the methods used in race relations studies, which, I suggest, treat black staff as a monolithic group and ignore the effects of the intersection of race and gender.

2.8 Masculinity and the prison environment

It is worth emphasising from the outset of this discussion that studies which investigate gender inequality tend not to disaggregate according to ethnicity/race. Therefore, inference cannot be made in regards to whether there is any variation between the accounts of black women and white women.

Gendered acts and meanings have been identified as salient in prison ethnography (Crewe, 2006; Hemmens et al., 2002; Genders and Player, 1989). A possible reason for this is because prison work is traditionally viewed as a 'man's job' and thus women working in prisons tend to be judged by their ability to emulate their male colleagues' behaviour and attitudes (Zimmer, 1986). Sara Tait supports this claim by inferring that discussions about gender in prisons tend to focus on the competence of male and female officers, rather than how gender shapes the accomplishment and experience of prison work (Tait, 2008). Cassandra Matthews et al.'s (2010) study on female correction officers working in US penal institutions, found that the female participants believed their

chances for promotion within corrections were negatively impacted by a belief that they could not perform the job as well as men in comparable positions, that it was an environment marked by sexual harassment, and that there were problems in balancing work and home responsibilities. The study reported that male correctional officers were viewed as dominating the field. Matthews et al.'s findings are similar to the way women view their position in society in comparison to their male counterparts.

Anne Witz and Michael Savage (1992) assert that organisations are gendered, reflecting wider society's gender relations. In relation to prisons they postulate that 'the majority of organisational studies, ignored the dialectical relationship between gender and power in prison' (Savage and Witz, 1992, cited by Sim, 1994, p. 102). Joe Sim further asserts that prison studies have failed to take into consideration:

how the social order of the institution has been sustained and reproduced not only by organisational demands and individual personalities but also through deeply embedded discourses around masculinity and femininity (1994, p. 103).

In their research, Savage and Witz (1992) apply both Max Weber (1978) and Michel Foucault's (1979) formulations to highlight the importance of the interplay of power relations and discourse in organisations. A brief explication of Weber (1978) and Foucault's (1979) understanding of power, knowledge and subjectivity will be useful to illustrate this point.

Weber (1978) linked organisational power to structure and authority, which he considers inherent in any hierarchy or bureaucracy, suggesting that power of structural authority is an important mechanism for integrating diverse functional groups. Invariably, the effects of power depend upon who has it, how that person is perceived, and the particular situation in which power is invoked. As prisons are deemed to be masculine organisations, masculinity position dominates the structure and practices within it.

For Foucault, 'power is not something that is acquired, seized or shared, something one holds on to or allows to slip away' (Foucault, 1981, p. 94). Rather, power is relational; it becomes apparent when it is exercised. Because of this relational aspect, 'power is not associated with a particular institution, but with practices, techniques, and procedures. Power is employed at all levels, and through many dimensions' (Townley, 1993, p. 520).

By reformulating Weber (1978) and Foucault's (1979) ideas, Witz and Savage (1992) are able to argue that these interactions generate the patterning of control and order within organisations. Eamonn Carrabine and Brian Longhurst (1998) take Witz and Savage's (1992) concept and apply it to study prison management. In their paper they examined the interactions around masculinity in 'routine' and 'exceptional' types of prison management. They found elements of masculinity embedded in a prison routine involving the allocation of prisoners to activities and work.

Within prisons, social relations are formulated by power relations that regulate positions employees occupy. For example, men and women are positioned within distinct subject positions within prisons. These power relations shape employees' capabilities and the resources they can access, and thus the possibilities for their action. This is illustrated by E. Szockyj's study completed in Canada. Szockyj (1989) found that women prison officers felt they were not fully accepted by their male peers, which prevented them from performing all aspects of the duties that the job entailed.

Gender relations within prisons are also evident in the daily interaction between staff. When women first started working as prison officers in male prisons, they encountered more resistance from their male counterparts than from male prisoners (Tewksbury, 2006; McMahon, 1999; Szockyj, 1989). Women prison officers felt 'ignored and shunned or noticed and talked about' (Zimmer, 1986, p. 64). Lynn Zimmer's study, completed in the US, reported that women officers working in male prisons suffered from subtle forms of discrimination and harassment. Women also reported being allocated to unpopular tasks and excluded from more highly valued tasks (Zimmer, 1986). It would further appear that male prison officers look to sexualise and protect female prison officers (Britton, 2003). Hence, women entering this occupation may find themselves in a subordinate and sexualised position, which may lead to unwanted attention and sexual harassment (HMIP, 2007). This view is supported by Craig Hemmens et al.'s (2002) article, which examined US corrections services. Their study found that women working in corrections tended to experience harassment from male staff.

Other studies completed in the US have reported that some male employees were of the opinion that women cannot perform the job as well, or in the same manner, as their male counterparts (Camp and Langan, 2005; Camp et al., 1995). The favourable view of masculine traits is shown in male prison officers' critical view of characteristics ascribed to females. Conversely, female employees' presence in prisons was found to have a positive effect on the environment. Cheryl Peterson (1982) found the presence of female officers caused male prisoners to be less 'macho' and better behaved. They were also described as caring, relaxing, and sensitive. These characteristics are viewed with disdain (Szockyj, 1989) by their male counterparts and seen as a threat (Zimmer, 1986; Jurik, 1985; Peterson, 1982) in an environment such as a prison. This is perhaps because they contradict masculine traits such as aggression, which is perceived as a necessity when working in prisons because prisons are violent and volatile places (Tewksbury, 2006; Lutze and Murphy, 1999).

A survey completed by Ben Crouch (1985), in the US, set out to establish the perceptions of prison officers and prisoners towards cross-gender supervision, personal privacy and institutional security. The study found that staff anticipated complaints, security problems and violence. Crouch concluded that when women first entered the Prison Service, this threatened the 'occupational self-image' because prison work was dangerous. This is another indication of how prison work is described in relation to masculine traits, demonstrating how gender stereotypes are perpetuated within this occupation.

Following on from this argument, prior to women working in all types of prisons in the UK, it was taken for granted that Prison Service employees were white men. This was not questioned until large numbers of women began to question elements of the Prison Service culture, because their expectations as women did not correspond to the behaviour associated with the prevailing values of those who uphold the culture. Elaine Crawley (2004b) suggests the reason women challenged the status quo of prisons was because they dispute the way their male colleagues understand their work as something intrinsically masculine. This argument can be extended to take into account the way in which the environment is racialised. I am suggesting that racialisation is not mainly about numbers, but a process of making something meaningful or of value in terms of the idea of race. So what is at issue here is how the idea of prison role and task is coded white. Prison staff are predominantly white men; furthermore, the staff statistics provided earlier indicated that white women were the second largest staff group. Therefore it may be argued that the organisation is not only genderised but also racialised.

To summarise, a review of the literature has shown that the British Prison Service is gendered and racialised, and this structures the organisation. Race and gender inequalities are reproduced by practices and procedures highlighted in studies which examine prison staff's work experience. This is not surprising as prisons replicate society's values and norms as stipulated by Finola Farrant, who states that:

How knowledge and power is structured and exercised in contemporary Britain has particular bearings upon minority ethnic women in contact with the Criminal Justice System [whether they are clients or employees] (2009, p. 126).

I put forward the view that because their gender and race may be perceived as troublesome to the organisation, the presence of black women as employees in the British Prison Service disrupts the status quo, thus creating conflict within prisons. Therefore black women contradict the axiomatic white male employee image. Nirmal Puwar (2004) explains that the white male body is the universal norm within society and thus within organisations. Thus black and/or women's bodies are 'space invaders' which disturb the status quo yet also 'bear the weight of the sedimented past' (Puwar, 2004, p. 1). Hence, black and/or women disrupt these spaces rather than coexist within them.

The literature review presents my orientation to my research based on previous studies in the field of the sociology of prisons. The studies referred to illustrate a lack of acknowledgement of the intersection of race and gender, which impacts on the daily reality of black women employees. Thus the ideas and views put forward in these studies are based on generalisations of white women, black men, and white men's experience of working in prisons. It follows, therefore, that the perception of black women, which stems from the influence of the intersection of race and gender, appears not to be taken into consideration when theorising about Prison Service employees' experience.

The aim of this thesis is therefore to exemplify the diversity of experience within the different staff groups by presenting the standpoint of black women. I aim to illustrate the importance of taking into account that black women are gendered and racialised subjects and that they take up various subject positions within the prison environment, and an alternative method of analysing this group will be put forward. An organisational psychodynamic approach will be used in this study, in conjunction with an intersectionality framework. This approach aims to provide a fuller picture of the experience of working in prisons from the perspective of black women.

Taking this idea into consideration, I will endeavour to examine how the subjectivities and emotional lives of individuals and groups shape and are shaped by aspects of the social, cultural and organisational context. Relating this idea specifically to the impact of racial and gender difference, there is a suggestion that it produces tension and conflict that is intersubjective and organisational. Studies by Stuart Stevenson (2012), Anton Obholzer Vega Roberts (1994) and Isabel Menzies Lyth (1988) have shown that individuals and groups mobilise social defenses. By applying this notion I aim to avoid taking behaviour at face value or as belonging only to the individual, but rather take into account how it manifests within the wider relational dynamics within the organisation. Therefore, this study aims to explore the way in which black women develop their subjectivity, which incorporates multiple facets such as gender, race, culture, and organisational identity, as they attempt to function as a Prison Service employee. This is methodologically different to the studies referred to in this chapter.

In the next chapter, I outline the epistemology, methodology and method used to collect and analyse the data in this research.

3 Methodology

3.1 Rationale

The review of the literature on British Prison Service employees showed that there was limited information about black women's experience of working within the organisation, because research findings in this context are primarily based on samples of white men, although some studies have examined white women's experience (McMahon, 1999; Crouch, 1985), and there have been a number of studies that have investigated race relations in prisons (Singh-Bhui and Fossi, 2008; Edgar and Martin, 2004), with black men's views dominating the findings. To my knowledge, however, none of these studies have distinguished black women workers' experience from that of white women or black men.

By presenting prison employees as a homogeneous group, gender and racial difference amongst employees is ignored. Employees located in a particular position as a result of their gendered racialisation such as black women, are rendered 'invisible' in prison occupation literature or presented as 'problematic' in studies that examine diversity issues. Black feminist researchers such as Kwame Owusu-Bempah and Dennis Howitt (2000) assert that this approach is a means of 'pathologising' black experience in a white-dominated society. To the extent that black women employees are represented in the existing literature, their experiences are trivialised and marginalised, as are their contributions at an organisational level. At an individual level this means that lived

experience is negated and therefore black women remain at the margins of the organisation.

This study will deconstruct the idea of a homogeneous British Prison Service employee, by illustrating the complexity of black women's psychosocial experience and subjectivity within the particular work environment. According to post-structural feminists, 'subjectivity' refers to 'conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the world' (Weedon, 1987, p. 32). Black women's subjectivity is influenced by their gendered racialisation. Therefore it is argued that the discreet theories of race and those of gender used in prison research are inadequate as they do not take into consideration black women's experience of race and gender as 'simultaneous and linked' social identities (hooks, 1989).

Another limitation identified in the literature review was the disregard for how organisational psychodynamics impacted on the experience of Prison Service employees. That is, that the studies referred to do not examine the effects of the unconscious dimensions of organisational life on the individuals who work within the organisation. Hence, there is no analysis of the relational dynamics that occur at an organisational, group or individual level. It is important to investigate the inter-relationships between individuals and groups to discover how groups and organisational culture create

dysfunctional relational dynamics, which can lead to individuals experiencing their work environment as hostile places that create anxiety and which needs to be defended against.

Taken together, the dynamics of intersubjective and group relations, and the combination of processes of gendering and racialisation, make for a complex terrain. I have chosen to combine intersectionality theory and organisational psychodynamics to understand the psychosocial experience of black women employees working in a specific organisational context. For this reason, organisations are made up of, and shaped by, the individuals within it. Therefore the presence of black women employees create a constellation of social interactions that are blurred by the dynamics of race and gender. It is important to analyse the various constellations that affect the relational dynamics experienced by black women, which in turn leads them to behave in a particular manner, or have particular ideas and beliefs about the organisation. The aim of this approach is to represent a view of the world as it is constructed by the participants.

3.2 Aim of study

My intention in undertaking this research was to avoid perpetuating the image of black women as victims of systemic inequalities, but rather use their accounts of their lived experience to understand the power relations and complex inter-relationship between multiple identities: race, gender and employment status. I aimed to show how organisational psychodynamics can influence individuals' behaviour, group behaviour and organisational culture, by demonstrating that an organisation as a system has its own

life which is both conscious and unconscious (Obholzer and Roberts, 1994; Czander, 1993; Hirschhorn, 1993; Miller, 1993). As in any organisation, working in institutions such as prisons can be experienced as both a painful burden (for example, in the task that needs to be performed) and a pleasurable activity, for instance, in the outcome (Kets De Vries, 1991). I attempted to explore participants' accounts as a way to understand how working in prisons at times was experienced as painful and to be avoided on the one hand, and how pleasure is obtained from being a Prison Service employee on the other. In light of this, my focus on the intersection of race, gender and organisational psychodynamics is to examine how certain subject positions are ascribed to, and taken up, by black women (Browne and Misra, 2003), and use their interpretation of their daily reality to create an alternative standpoint of Prison Service employees' experience, and thereby contribute to the emerging literature in this field.

3.3 Research questions

Four research questions guided this thesis.

- How do black women employees define themselves within the Prison Service context?
- How do the specificities of prison culture(s) affect black women employees?
- How do black women navigate the complexities of status and power within a predominantly white male hierarchal organisation such as prisons?

- How does working in the Prison Service impact upon the social and emotional construction of subjectivity for black women?

With these questions in mind, my goal was to gain a multidimensional understanding of the psychosocial experience of black women Prison Service employees. I therefore considered a number of methodologies and methods that might answer these questions.

3.4 Qualitative approach

To complete my study I needed a methodology and methods that would enable me to address my research questions. Hence, my study took a qualitative approach because such an approach is based on the idea of striving to understand social processes in context, while exploring the meanings of social events for those who are involved in them (Esterberg, 2002). A qualitative approach takes into account the variations of complex human behaviour in a specific context. Qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world – studying things in their natural settings, while attempting to make sense of, and interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). I utilised a qualitative research methodology for several reasons. First, a qualitative approach is warranted when the nature of the research question requires an exploration (Stake, 2000). The questions posed in qualitative research often begin with how or what, so that the researcher can gain an in-depth understanding of what is going on relative to the topic (Patton, 2002; Seidman, 1998). For the current study I explored how the intersection of race and gender impact on

the organisational psychodynamics when black women enter the organisation as employees. Second, a qualitative study allows the researcher to explore phenomena such as feelings or thought processes (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). In my study, I explored participants' perceptions and lived experiences (Jones et al., 2006) of being black, women, and Prison Service employees. Third, some qualitative methods such as ethnographic studies emphasise the researcher's role as an active participant in the study (Creswell, 2003). More specifically, it emphasises that the researcher is an active partner in the study rather than a passive author. This is vital in a psychosocial study such as this one, because attention to the impact of the data and process on the researcher is a key criterion in psychosocial research. As a black woman Prison Service employee I was the key instrument in data collection and the interpreter of the data findings (Stake, 2000). I was also able to draw on the dynamics between the participants and use this as a source of data, because I utilised reflective practices and became a reflective practitioner (Clarke and Hoggett, 2009). Using an 'ethnographic eye', which involves studying a situation or context from an ethnographic point of view (Berglund, 2014) enabled me to use my employee experience to visualise and imagine the context described by participants. I will discuss my use of an 'ethnographic eye' in more detail later in this chapter.

The sections that follow describe the research paradigm, design and approach used to achieve the purpose of the study.

3.5 Philosophical foundation

The epistemology framing this qualitative research is intersectionality theory and organisational psychodynamics, which is centred on understanding, rather than explaining, reality. The focus is on subjective realities, constructed through a process of creating meaning. The epistemological stance I have taken is that experience can tell us something about social reality. In terms of analysis, the interpretive theoretical perspective essentially infers that I will start from the position that our knowledge of reality is a social construction by individuals that applies equally to researchers. Thus, according to Geoff Walsham (1993) there is no objective reality 'out there' that can be discovered by researchers and replicated by others. This view provided a framework for understanding the way in which black women construct and interpret their reality based on their own accounts of their individual and shared experience. It is this view which enabled me to be led by the data rather than begin from a position of believing I already had the answers because I shared similar characteristics to the participants. This way of thinking will aid understanding of how the participants describe their interactions with their colleagues and consciously and/or unconsciously negotiate the relational dynamics created by gender and racial difference.

Black feminists have convincingly argued that better knowledge can be gained about black women's experience of gendered racialisation by studying black women rather than focusing exclusively on white women or on black men (Hill Collins, 2000). An example of this approach is illustrated by the work of a black feminist scholar Amina Mama (2011, 1995). When setting up The African Gender Institute (AGI) in Cape Town in 2000, Mama found that gender and women's studies units were isolated. In addition, the

faculties were felt to be in a 'precarious position as a result of the conservative intellectual and institutional terrain that constrained the emergence of a coherent body of locally grounded feminist scholarship' (Mama, 2011, p. e6). Mama, along with her colleagues, embarked on challenging the patriarchal systems of knowledge production by giving women in the African context a voice in academic institutions.

The feminist sociologist Patricia Hill Collins in her work also advocated for black women to move away from the positivistic methods of knowledge production, by stating that:

Black women should access another epistemology that encompasses standards for assessing truth that are widely accepted among African-American women. An experiential, material base underlies a black feminist epistemology, namely, collective experiences and accompanying worldviews that US black women sustained based on our particular history (2000, p. 256).

Although Hill Collins's study was completed in the US and Mama's (2011) work in South Africa, Mama (1995) has also completed similar work in the UK, and, like other UK scholars such as Gail Lewis (2000), they have all used black women's narrative as a means to generate knowledge, which is a well-established feminist and psychosocial methodology. The application of using experience as a means of knowledge production is an important mechanism to unearth and understand black women's lived experience for two reasons. First, it shows that a diversity of experience and understanding results from

social divisions and inequalities and that therefore there is a plurality of 'knowledge'. Second, it gives black women an opportunity to share and reflect on their lived experience in ways that enable them to claim a specific kind of knowledge, which is 'black women's standpoint' (Hill Collins 2000, p. 28). I relate Hill Collins' notion to my research in the following way: by claiming that black women who work for the British Prison Service are a unique group who may have shared experiences as a result of the intersection of race and gender, as well as their employment status. They also have different experiences to black men, white women, and white men, and thus as a group black women Prison Service employees can collectively develop into a field of knowledge named 'black women's standpoint'.

Feminist methodology provides the opportunity for researchers to document how individual women's lives are shaped by multiple influences and experiences. Though not specifically addressing black women, Melanie Mauthner et al. (2002) support the use of applying a feminist approach by postulating that feminist methodologies enable researchers to re-examine and challenge the assumptions that underpin research practice, by focusing on women's experience from their own point of view, which in turn challenges non-feminist methodologies.

To examine the psychosocial experience of black women requires the application of research methods that delve beneath the surface (Clarke and Hoggett, 2009) to capture the emotional responses that arise from being a black woman working in the British

Prison Service. Furthermore, it is important to apply a framework that may illuminate the way in which social influences and pressures, which could be described as gendered and racialised within prisons, can impact upon an individual's state of mind. Henceforth, 'emotions cannot be detached from the specific socio-cultural contexts in which they are embedded' (Cranny-Francis et al., 2003, p. 233). That is, participants' experience and working relationships are not only influenced by the relational dynamics between individuals and groups, but also by their interaction within a particular organisational context. To achieve my research aims required an in-depth understanding of participants' psychosocial experience. This would be best met through adopting a psychosocial approach, which takes into account the intra-psychic and intersubjective theories (Hoggett, 1992), along with theories that address the social determinants of black women's experience.

By combining feminist methodologies, specifically intersectionality with psychosocial methodologies such as organisational psychodynamics, I endeavoured to provide an insight into the internal and external world of the participants, taking into account components such as expectations, subjectivity, culture and anxiety to examine individuals' experience within a particular context. In this way, consideration can be made of how individuals' subjectivity may be influenced by their interaction within the social world as members of a group marginalised because of their gendered racialisation.

In keeping with a feminist approach, I was keen to make the voice of the participants central to the research. Shulamit Reinharz (1992), writing about contemporary feminist ethnography, states that placing women at the centre of research has three goals that influence the feminist researcher:

1. documenting the lives and activities of women;
2. understanding the experiences of women from their point of view;
3. conceptualising women's behaviour as an expression of social context.

I have related these goals to my research by applying an intersectionality and organisational psychodynamic approach. This approach has enabled me to consider how black women's experience of being outsiders within influences their subjectivity within the prison context and has also helped me to consider the different psychosocial concepts and organisational structures that may influence this.

3.6 The study

I had initially planned to use a mixed method approach by combining ethnographic methods, participant observation and photo-elicitation to capture as much in-depth information about the lived experience of black women within the prison context as possible. I also felt that participant observation would enable me to gain an in-depth account of prison culture, while photo-elicitation would allow participants to capture

important images of their work environment that might be discussed during the second interviews.

I chose not to undertake participant observation because it might have drawn attention to the participants; remove anonymity; and inadvertently breach confidentiality. My presence for an extended period of time within a prison would have meant my real identity and purpose of being there would have to be revealed, and I would have had to gain consent from the governor of the prison to undertake my research. In addition, other workers and prisoners would be made aware of my study and the participants' involvement by the very nature of my presence. Time constraints were also a factor in deciding not to undertake participant observation.

To compensate for not undertaking participant observation, I adapted my ethnography because I already had a good understanding of prison culture and the environment, having worked for the Prison Service for eight years in four different prisons across the country. My experience of working in different prisons with a range of different people and interacting with prisoners in various roles had developed my 'ethnographic eye' which enabled me to imagine and visualise participants' environments; the settings they described; the incidents they encountered; and at times share their emotions with regard to the painful feelings of hurt, disempowerment and isolation. I was also able to draw on my insider knowledge as a source of information when examining organisational culture. In light of this, and on reflection, I am of the opinion that participant observation would

not have strengthened my data, but in fact might have obstructed the openness of the participants to share their stories, their journeys and their experiences. Furthermore, participant observation involves spending a period of time in a particular setting, observing participants as well as their environment. My presence might have changed the behaviour of the group (Iacono et al., 2009) and also might have obscured my reporting and analysis, because I would no longer be relying on the participants' construct of their environment or what was occurring at that particular time. Rather, I would be interpreting my own observations. This is distinct from the idea of an 'ethnographic eye' which relies on imagery and visualisation of what is being reported.

To avoid making assumptions and bias, I used secondary data analysis. Secondary data analysis involves the use of existing data, collected for the purposes of a prior study, in order to pursue a research interest that is distinct from that of the original work (Szabo and Strang, 1997). This method may involve the use of single or multiple qualitative data (Heaton, 1998). In addition, the approach may either be employed by researchers to re-use their own data or employed by independent analysts using previously established qualitative data sets. For the purpose of my study, I used secondary analysis in tandem with the theories I applied when analysing the data, in particular to support claims made by participants in relation to the perceived motivations of their colleagues referred to in incidents they described. The application of secondary data analysis enabled me to contextualise and interpret their accounts, while substantiating their claims and my own analysis of the data. This allowed me to triangulate the analysis using secondary data to ground and interrogate my participants' claims and statements, but also to ensure that a

critical distance of my own 'ethnographic eye' could be adopted. Thus I could avoid assumptions that I already knew the answers based on my own experience.

After deciding on my research method and beginning the project, I imagined the research journey would be somewhat difficult, but interesting. However, I underestimated the challenges I would encounter at different stages of the research. In the sections that follow, I endeavour to describe each phase of the research project. During the first phase I applied for ethical approval and contacted the NOMS National Research Committee (NRC) to gain access to participants. The second phase involved advertising my research and identifying the participants. During the third phase I collected data. I completed a pilot study in the first instance and then used ethnographic interviews to collect data which would enable me to explore the social interactions, behaviours and perceptions shown in participants' accounts. During the fourth phase I analysed the data.

3.7 Ethnography

I have already mentioned the 'ethnographic eye' in the previous section, but here I consider the question of ethnography in more detail. Ethnography can be defined as a method involving the immersion of a researcher 'in a social setting for an extended period of time observing behaviour, listening to what is said [...] and asking questions' (Bryman, 2004, p. 539).

I applied an ethnographic approach to explore how individuals develop their understanding of their organisation and who they are within it as a consequence of their role and duties, as well as their personal characteristics and subjectivity. An ethnographic study was completed, which employed a qualitative approach with the intention of capturing as much in-depth information about the lived experience of black women within this occupational setting. This approach was felt to be appropriate because I was able to explore the participants' experience in their own voices, capture their understanding of what it means and feels like to be Prison Service employees, and examine the more complex and relational dynamics that affected the participants within this environment.

I was able to remove my practitioner's lens for another set of lenses that I refer to as my 'ethnographic eye'. This allowed me to imagine and visualise the incidents and situations described by participants. I was able to understand their views and analyse their perceptions; understand the actions of their colleagues as described by the participants; as well as their social settings in a different way, to understand and explore their accounts. I delved beneath the surface of organisational behaviour to examine the unconscious life of the organisation (Obholzer and Roberts, 1994). This facilitated the application of a psychodynamic stance to explore the possible unconscious meaning of organisational events. More specifically, it examined the way in which individuals manage their anxiety in the organisation by making use of defense mechanisms.

James Clifford and George Marcus assert that ‘what one sees in a coherent ethnographic account, the imaged construct of the other, is connected in a continuous double structure with what one understands’ (2010, p. 101). This quote provides an indication of the merger between what one actually sees and hears and what is understood by the ethnographer. Using my ‘ethnographic eye’ in this double way, I expand this idea further by relating it to the psychosocial, in respect of focusing on the unconscious, phantasised aspect of participants’ narratives, not merely on what they said, but how they expressed and emphasised certain words and phrases and the change in their emotion when recollecting painful situations.

A particular strength of this approach was my ability to draw on my insider position as a black woman Prison Service employee, to help me immerse myself into the social world of the participants and thus collect rich, holistic insights into the participants’ work environment, as well as capture the nature of the location. It is from this standpoint that I applied ethnography to my research, as I aimed to examine the psychosocial experience of being black, a woman, and a Prison Service employee, as well as the way this group as gendered and racialised subjects apply defense mechanisms to overcome their marginality in the workplace. I also applied Hill Collins’ (2000) assertion of collective experiences as a way to generate knowledge.

3.8 Ethnography and researcher reflexivity

Reflexivity is a concept with a number of meanings; I am interested in the concept when used within a feminist and psychosocial methodology. I am using reflexivity to explain how the ethnographer constantly analyses and evaluates his or her own actions (Abercrombie et al., 2000, pp. 291–92), feelings and emotions during the research when producing data and writing accounts, while having the capacity to monitor the beliefs she or he holds (Seale 1998) and transform them into public accountable knowledge. This is important because reflexivity enables the researcher not only to learn and interpret the meanings participants ascribe to their reality, but also to be flexible with regard to adapting to the world that is studied (Charmaz, 2004) and describe and understand the process. Within the psychosocial context, I used reflexivity as a means to take into account the feelings and emotions I experienced during the course of the research, with the aim of capturing these intimate experiences and incorporating and understanding them, rather than excluding and disregarding them. Reflexivity may also be described as a ‘style of research that makes clear the researcher’s own beliefs and objectives’ (Gilbert, 2008, p. 512). This is an important point because the researcher should acknowledge his or her own feelings, preconceptions and attitudes, and how they may consciously and/or unconsciously impact on the study. Simon Clarke and Paul Hoggett (2009) position the reflexive practitioner at the heart of psychosocial research.

This reflexive stance made me very aware of the influence of my multiple identities and shared characteristics with the participants, which Shulamit Reinharz refers to as ‘multiple selves’ (Reinharz, 1997, p. 3). Therefore, my multiple identities and roles: black, woman, practitioner, researcher, provided me with a unique position within the

study. I was able to relate to the notion of 'outsider within' (Lorde, 1984) and use this location as a means to understand participants' subjectivity. In relation to gender and race, this dual intellectual citizenship (black/female) gives black feminist scholars critical insights into the conditions of oppression, because they both experience it as a lived reality and can think about it using the tools of critical analysis (Hill Collins, 2000). This may create a bond between the researcher and researched, produced by both a conscious and social connection. What is more, the interaction between researcher and researched who share experiences and social positions may also be heavily influenced by an unconscious dynamic structure that may include anxiety and the unconscious defenses deployed to make this anxiety bearable. By being reflexive I was able to cope with my multiple roles and identity. This allowed me to see my own self within the research, and I was able to develop an understanding of how other people may identify with aspects of myself.

3.9 Gaining access

Having gained ethical approval by The Open University Human Participants and Materials Research Ethics Committee, I contacted the NOMS National Research Committee (NRC) to obtain authorisation to contact individual prison governors formally and request permission to invite their black female staff to participate in the study. At the time I thought that having the NRC's backing and approval would be an easy way for me to gain access to Prison Service staff. Initially, I thought I would need to have the governors' authorisation to interview staff inside prisons. This, however, was not the

case, because as I was an employee of the Prison Service I was able to gain access to prisons at the invitation of the participants and therefore did not require either the NRC or governors' authorisation to interview staff once participants had agreed to take part in the study.

My application to the NRC was rejected because I declined to agree to their recommendations which were as follows:

- The committee considers the research project could benefit from a non-black female control group to compare i.e. European origin female staff working within the Prison Service.
- The NRC considers the study group of 15/20 is relatively small. Would the research project benefit from a larger study group?

The NRC had a very different conception of my research process to the one I had, and I felt their recommendations were unsuitable for the research questions I wanted to address. In addition, the recommendations implied that research which uses one group's statement is inadequate as a means of knowledge production, as the differences and convergences in the statements cannot be compared with another group. My stance, however, was that a black feminist psychosocial approach could be used to examine the experience from one group, which might convey something about the psychosocial experience of being racialised and gendered subjects within a specific organisation, and

that this information could be used to produce knowledge. I claim that the NRC wanted a more quantitative/objective approach that is grounded in a very different epistemological stance. I therefore chose not to apply a comparative methodology as a means of collecting data.

At the time I felt very upset about the response I had received from the NRC, and decided to use the emotions that had been stirred up as data. I analysed the possible reasons behind the NRC's recommendations, and began to think that maybe it had something to do with the organisation's culture. This made me realise that there was a need for this to be a central component for analysis. I felt there was a deeper meaning to the advice to take a comparative approach to the study. However, while I could not understand the constellation of issues that had created the need for this advice and the rejection of my application, this encounter supported my initial observation with regard to the lack of studies depicting black women employee's experience in British prison literature. There seemed to be an overlap between what methods of knowledge production were deemed legitimate, whose version of experience prevailed and was deemed as normal, and who would be perceived as deviant, irrational, and inferior, resulting in the dominant groups' experience and interpretation overshadowing minority groups. By following the recommendation to take a comparative approach to my study, this would have overshadowed black women's experience, and would have continued to have ignored the invisibility of this group of employees in prison literature. In addition, it would have ignored the issues of power and dominance related to gender and race (Kochman, 1981). The NRC's response to my application made me consider organisational psychodynamics

as an analytical framework to understand the deeper meaning of behaviour in the organisation.

3.10 Identifying and recruiting participants

Identification, initial contact and recruitment of potential participants form the foundation for collecting rich data. Therefore, it was vital for me to attempt to attract a wide range of participants. This required consideration of the most appropriate procedure to recruit potential participants. I aimed to ensure that the recruitment process showed respect for the autonomy of the participants by avoiding any potential undue influence, as well as maintain confidentiality, anonymity and privacy.

In preparing to recruit participants I was particularly cognisant of the research setting with regard to the type of organisation, that is, a white, male-dominated hierarchal institution, and the vulnerability of the participants, taking into account that they were members of gender and racial minority groups and few in number within the organisation. I therefore endeavoured to attract participants from across the country working in a variety of roles within the Prison Service. The only criterion was that participants were Prison Service employees whose origin or descent was African and/or Caribbean and/or Asian.

I contacted a colleague who worked for RESPECT for advice on how I could identify black women employees across the country. He gave me details of someone who worked in the NOMS Human Resource department. When I telephoned him, he explained that he would not be able to give me the names of staff, but that he could, however, provide me with a statistical breakdown of staff groups by ethnicity, gender and region. I used this information to decide how best to attract participants.

I found that black women worked all over the country and devised a cheap effective publicity strategy that would ensure maximum exposure to attract participants. I decided to design a leaflet (Appendix 1) that gave a brief outline of the study; information about the researcher; and my contact details as a means to advertise my research.

The leaflet was distributed at meetings and conferences and displayed at The Songhai Empire – the NOMS headquarters and training centres across the country. A copy of the leaflet was also included in the RESPECT 2010 Annual General Meeting (AGM) magazine. I allocated a makeshift stand at the AGM where I was able to publicise my research and encourage delegates to participate in the study. Sixteen black women completed a contact details sheet. All participants were given an information sheet (Appendix 2) and a consent form (Appendix 3) to complete before taking part in the study. Four black female delegates agreed to participate in the focus group that was held on the same day. The aim of the focus group was to act as a pilot study. Seventeen black women participated in the main study, two of which took part in the pilot study.

3.11 Participants

In this section I provide demographic information and present a picture of the 17 black women who participated in this study.

All participants were given the opportunity to choose a pseudonym. I chose pseudonyms for the places where the participants worked and chose to use the names of African kingdoms for two reasons, first to symbolise my solidarity with my African heritage and second to raise awareness about African kingdoms before colonisation. I have not disclosed the geographical location of the places where the participants work to ensure they are not identified. I also chose the names of the other characters referred to by the participants. The names chosen are biblical names.

Participants were given a simple questionnaire to complete to collect personal information –such as name, chosen pseudonym, ethnicity, role, place of work, age range, length of service range – before the interview began. They were also given a detailed information sheet about the study (Appendix 2) and a copy of the consent and confidentiality form (Appendix 3).

Eleven participants worked in Public Sector Prisons across England and two participants worked for a private sector prison provider. Six women worked at The Songhai Empire. The participants worked in a variety of roles as shown in Table 1 on p. 75.

Ethnic origin

The participants were given the opportunity to self-define their ethnicity. Seven participants defined themselves as black Caribbean; two as black British; two as British Asian; one as black African Caribbean; one as black African; one as British Indian Asian; one as Asian; one as black mixed race heritage and one as mixed heritage.

The majority of participants were of African and/or Caribbean origin or descent. A possible reason for this is that the female staff from Asian ethnic groups was very low relative to those of African and/or Caribbean descent.

Age

The participants were aged between 30 and 50 years old. The participants were asked to give their age range rather than specific age because it is an old rule of etiquette and I felt meeting the participants for the first time and asking for their exact age might appear impolite. However, some participants told me their actual age at the interview and this is included.

Length of service

Participants were asked to give a range of the length of their time in service. I chose to ask this question rather than ask for a specific length of service because of the assumptions that might be made unconsciously. That is, that prison staff have a tendency to correlate length of service with knowledge and competence. I, however, was more interested in experience and participants’ view about their working environment. I felt that length of service was not paramount to experience and therefore there was no minimum length of service requirement to participate in the study. Furthermore, I was attempting to avoid perpetuating the myth that long-serving staff had more insight with regard to the organisation because this might have an adverse impact on the way participants told their stories.

Table 1, List of participants – pen picture (Appendix 4).

Table 1

No	Name	Position / grade	Location alias	Length of Service	Age range	Ethnicity
1	Shirley	Manager G	Juffure Regional Office	5–10	36–50	Asian

2	Krishma	Manager F	The Songhai Empire	5–10	36–50	British Asian
3	Etta	AO	The Songhai Empire	1–5	51+	Black Caribbean
4	Ella	Temporary promoted Senior Prison Officer	HMP Kilwa HMP Dahomey	5–10	36–50	Black Caribbean
5	Deloris	EO	The Songhai Empire	10+	36–50	Black Caribbean – Jamaican descent
6	Lorna White	Manager D	The Songhai Empire	5–10	36–50	Black Caribbean
7	Little	Short duration programme facilitator	HMP Bamum	1–5	32	Black – mixed race heritage
8	Lesia	Manager D	The Songhai Empire	10+	36–50	Black African Caribbean
9	Annette	Manager G	HMP Asante	1–5	36–50	Black African

10	Lisa	Manager G	HMP Nok	1–5	45	British Indian Asian
11	Monique	Manager G	HMP Asante	5–10	42	Black British
12	Andy	Senior Prison Custody Officer	HMP Sahelian	5–10	36–50	Black Caribbean
13	Raisa	Teacher	HMP Sahelian	1–5	36–50	British Asian
14	Trina	Prison Officer	HMP Mali	5–10	36–50	Mixed race heritage
15	Anastasia	Manager F	HMP Benin	1–5	51+	Black Caribbean
16	Alicia	AO	The Songhai Empire	5–10	36–50	Black Caribbean
17	Rosa	Prison Officer	HMP Kerma / HMP Kilwa / HMP Gomma	10 +	48	Black British

3.12 Pilot study

The aim of the focus group was to:

- (a) generate themes for individual interviews;

- (b) explore differences and similarities in the knowledge and experience of black women who worked for the Prison Service;
- (c) look at the ways in which experience, for example, in connection with race and gender at work, is given meaning by the women;
- (d) examine how meanings are negotiated between the women. I hoped I would be able to tap into interpersonal communication within the group with members who had some shared experience.

I applied Uwe Flick's (2006) assertion that real groups start from a history of shared interactions in relation to an issue under discussion. The participants were all black women and Prison Service employees; they had similar characteristics which produced a sense of socially shared meanings. The focus group provided evidence of consistent shared views and ideas that I was able to formulate into themes and which could then inform the questions for the main interview.

In terms of their shared gender and race the women formed a homogenous group as defined by Flick (2006). For her, a homogenous group comprises individuals who are 'comparable in the essential dimensions related to the research question and have a similar background' (Flick, 2006: 192). There were also notable differences between the participants, for example, age, role and length in service, etc.

The participants were asked eight questions in total which were grouped into four categories: prison culture; working relationships; characteristics; staff networks (Appendix 5). I used the focus group data to examine the dominant, sub cultural and institutional values, beliefs and group norms amongst the participants, through analysing the operation of humour, consensus and dissent, and examining different types of talk used within the group. I am referring here to the way in which certain points were emphasised using various colloquial phrases accompanied by facial expressions such as rolling of the eyes. I was able to watch and listen to these cues and draw on the group dynamics to explore perceptions, experiences and understandings of working in prisons.

The focus group provided a rich source of data, but I chose not to use this method in the main part of the research because of the logistics of getting a group of participants together at a convenient time as they lived and worked across the country. It was easier for me to travel to individual participants' locations.

I chose ethnographic interviews because I thought this method would capture participants' feelings that could be used as data. I thought this method was appropriate to address my research questions as I was attempting to obtain private personal information about experience. I adopted an approach of analysis used by Yvonne Channer (1995). In her research of black people's life histories, she acquired her data from the themes that emerged from the descriptions and recounted experience of the participants. The themes

for the interviews were not imposed but reflected the emphasis given by participants to areas of their lives.

3.13 Interviews

Having used the pilot study to generate themes and topics for the interviews, I carried out 24 interviews with 17 black female Prison Service employees; 7 participants were interviewed twice. The participants selected for the second interviews were chosen on account of their availability and also to achieve a range of participants working in various roles. The main emphasis of the second interviews was to explore participants' views about the notion of Strong Black Woman (SBW). The second interview questions (Appendix 6) were funnel questions. This type of questioning involved gaining further information about a specific subject. Funnel-type questions allow free responses, narrowed down to specific questions and responses, and facilitate the discovery of respondents' frames of reference (Kerlinger and Lee, 2000). By using this technique I aimed to encourage participants to focus on specific aspects of their work experience.

The first interviews were semi-structured, employing a series of open-ended questions and providing a frame of reference for the interviewees. At the same time this minimally restrained their answers and expressions (Kerlinger and Lee, 2000) to obtain a clear understanding of the participants' perspectives (Potter, 1996; Rubin and Rubin, 1995). This approach allowed participants to reflect on, and discuss in detail, a variety of

subjects. All participants were asked the same questions in the same order. The questions posed in the first interview are shown below.

- 1) What made you decide to be an employee of the Prison Service?
- 2) Describe your journey, from your first day in your new role to the present. Include the highs, the lows, the positives, the negatives, and significant incidents.
- 3) What qualities and skills do you feel you brought to the service and what qualities and skills have developed since you've been there?
- 4) The Prison Service culture is white, male dominated, and process driven in respect of it is quite hierarchical. How does prison culture affect you as a person?
- 5) How do you balance working for the Prison Service which has got a bad reputation with the community, especially the black community. How do you balance being part of that organisation as an employee with your personal life?
- 6) What would you like to see come out of this research?

The interview questions were categorised by opinions, feelings about the organisation, what participants had encountered and experienced, and participants' knowledge. Very few changes were made to the wording of the questions, apart from the application of connecting words such as 'so' at the beginning of questions. The interviews were flexible because I allowed the participants to speak freely without any interruptions.

Participants chose the location of their interviews. Ten participants were interviewed at their place of work and seven at their homes. Individual interviews lasted between 20 and 110 minutes. All interviews were taped with the participants' consent.

3.14 Data analysis

As discussed in the previous section, the main method for collecting data involved interviewing participants. The aim of this approach was to gain insight into participants' experience and the meanings they attach to themselves, to other people, and to their environment. This method enabled me to collect rich in-depth data which might not have been received if I had used other methods such as participant observation (as discussed earlier).

After each interview was completed I gathered together all the information obtained from the participants. I not only transcribed the recordings but also identified the words that were emphasised, where the speaker paused represented by numbers in brackets, changes in body language, etc. I also recorded in my journal my own feelings and thoughts during the interview. I then systematically organised my data into hierarchical relationships (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This involved devising a word table which was organised by rows and columns of interest, cross-referenced with narrative data in the cells of the table. I was not only paying attention to the number of statements falling into each

category, but was also particularly concerned with the variety of meanings, ideas and interpretations found within each category.

During the transcription stage I was drawn to the theory of psychoanalysis, specifically organisational psychodynamics, because there was something in the participants' accounts, the way they spoke about the organisation and their location within it, which provoked anxiety in them as well as in me. This needed to be explored and understood. Organisational psychodynamics provided a theoretical framework to delve beneath the surface of participants' narrative to understand their psychosocial experience within this specific working environment.

I had not considered organisational psychodynamics until the analytical stage of my research, and for this reason I have used this theoretical framework as an analytical tool rather than a means of collecting data. This meant I had not chosen psychosocial methodologies such as free association narrative interviews, a method devised by Wendy Hollway and Tony Jefferson (2000). This method applies a form of questioning with the aim of generating emotionally significant (biographical) narratives. The method also applies a form of biographical narrative interview methods, a tool used to examine both the inner and outer worlds of an individual, focusing on the particularity of individual experience in unique historical and societal locations. This method is used to explore subjective and cultural formations, and trace interconnections between the personal and

social (Chamberlayne and King, 2000). These are two approaches specifically aimed at addressing psychosocial questions.

I was faced with a dilemma. The data suggested a psychosocial reading was urgently needed to capture some of the emotional complexities which seemed to lie within the data. Yet the method used had not had this in mind. To resolve this dilemma I adopted a theory of organisational psychodynamics in conjunction with intersectionality theory as the theoretical framework through which I could analyse the data.

Nine major themes emerged from the data that spoke to the psychosocial experience of black women: (1) support/empowerment; (2) race; (3) professional image; (4) barriers to professional socialisation; (5) Strong Black Woman (SBW); (6) integrity; (7) organisational culture; (8) negative feelings; (9) relationships (see Appendix 7).

Encountering adversity appeared to be a recurring theme throughout the narratives. What stood out in particular was the way in which the participants described how they overcame the adversity. Their accounts of overcoming adversity could be related to the notion of SBW. I felt this theme needed to be explored in more depth, which is why participants were asked a question about the notion of SBW during the second set of interviews.

Given the methods used, some of the analytical claims are more provisional than others, for example, my understanding of the notion of SBW as a structurally determined psychosocial retreat. Despite this, my analysis in Chapter 10 holds up under scrutiny and is intellectually rigorous. It is to be hoped that further work will subject these claims to further investigation.

3.15 Limitations of the sample

As with any sample, there are a number of limitations which can be identified in this study. These fall into two main areas. The first concern relates to the methodological limitations. The sample comprised of a single group based on a specific gender and racial characteristics: woman and black. This limits any findings from the research because they cannot be compared to other groups not displaying these characteristics. This point was raised by the NRC and was one reason given for my application being rejected. It is important to note, however, that this is a limitation and not a criticism of the research itself, and it is important to emphasise that by focusing on a specific group's experience this may provide an insight into wider social issues, that is, stories with a repeated narrative illustrate a pattern of experience. That pattern, I am arguing, is produced in a specific organisational setting, which, through social processing a category called 'black woman', gets produced. This is the essence of the study. In relation to experience, I want to hold on to what this patterned experience associated with a group called black woman tells us about prisons, examine this pattern of experience, and use it as a core concept to understand how it is socially and psychically determined in the prison context.

Another limitation is that the data collected from participants cannot be independently verified as it was self-reported; this limits this study because self-reported data contains several potential sources of bias, for example, selective memory (remembering or not remembering experiences or events that occurred at some point in the past).

Another possible limitation is researcher bias. We all have biases, whether or not we are conscious of them. Bias is when a person, place, or thing is viewed or shown in a consistently inaccurate way. It is usually negative. Michael Patton emphasises the importance of reporting 'any personal and professional information that may have affected data collection, analysis, and interpretation – either negatively or positively – in the minds of users of the findings' (Patton, 2002, p. 566). I recognised my bias when analysing the data. To overcome this bias, I became extremely critical when selecting the data to be studied and took into account what I might have omitted and the manner in which I had chosen to represent a person or incident. I also delineated my previous experience and personal assumptions and biases by talking with my supervisors, because it was important that I was able to ensure that the research outcome was not compromised in any way by my prior personal experience. As Alan Peshkin (1988) has suggested, by revealing or discussing my subjectivity, this helped me to manage my biases, not necessarily exorcising them, but applying them in a creative way by writing poetry in relation to the data.

My goal was that the participants' psychosocial experience should be clearly reflected and interpreted, and that my readers should feel convinced that my research was not adversely affected by any biases or preconceived conceptions. As mentioned earlier, the aim of this study was to make black women's experience as employees in the British Prison Service visible, giving this group of employees 'a voice', drawing on Diane Bell, (1996) and Diana Russell's, (1996) assertions that this group often does not have access to public forums to represent its experience. This approach, to represent or speak on behalf of marginalised groups, or groups deemed as 'other', has been debated by feminists over the years. It is worth noting when attempting to research the experience of a group that there is the potential of mis-representation, mis-use of power and abuse. To avoid this difficulty, I referred to Sue Wilkinson and Celia Kitzinger's (1996) notion of 're-presenting' rather than 'representing', a distinction originally made by Marx (*Darstellung/Vertretung*). Wilkinson and Kitzinger were concerned with the notion of re-presenting (giving a voice to marginalised individuals and groups who are often under-represented), rather than representing, which is deemed to be a patronising quality of standing in the place, and speaking on behalf, of the individual or group.

Christine Callender (1997) was able to present the views of her participants because she was of the opinion that being a black female teacher and researcher gave her greater insight into the topic area of black pupils within the education system. I share this view because I had similar characteristics to the participants in my own study. I also, however, acknowledged that shared characteristics with participants may have disadvantages. As Callender asserts, while it can 'open doors to meanings normally reserved for in group

members' (Callender, 1997, p. 11), it can also close doors as 'the researcher becomes too immersed in the situation to see clearly what is happening.' (Callender, 1997, p. 11). Conversely, Ann Oakley (1981) stipulates that typically the objective of finding out about people through interviewing is best achieved when the relationship of the interviewer and interviewee is non-hierarchical and when the interviewer is prepared to invest her own personal identity in the relationship. Taking into account Ning Tang's (2002) view that when women interview women, perceptions of each other based on such aspects as difference in social, cultural and personal backgrounds may influence the balance of power during the interview encounter, I hoped my shared characteristics assisted in eroding any hierarchy that might have been created as a result of the researcher–interviewer relationship.

In this chapter, I have given an in-depth description of the way I conducted the study and ethnographic interviews, together with the qualitative methods used to analyse them. Issues related to the researcher–participant relationship and how they may have been affected by my shared characteristics with participants was discussed. I have also stated my research questions and rationale for the study.

I have used this chapter to bridge the theoretical framework of this thesis (Chapters 4 and 5), with the actual research and analysis (Chapters 6 to 11). In doing so, I have illustrated the personal, theoretical and epistemological foundation of the research as a whole.

4 Black Feminism: An Intersectionality Approach

4.1 Introduction to theory chapters

The chapters on theory pull together strands from black feminist theory and organisational psychodynamic sources. I will endeavour to put forward the idea that psychosocial research shares with black feminism a strong focus on the concepts of relationality and the situated knower. By combining both theoretical frameworks it was my intention to show the importance of understanding the relationship between the psychological and the social.

With black feminism as its starting point, this chapter reviews the literature on gendered racialisation to show that gender and race are social categories that affect black women's daily reality. I will look at how black feminism emerged in the US as a result of the dissatisfaction felt by African-American women towards the 'whiteness' of feminist theories in the 1960s. I discuss a key concept of black feminism: intersectionality theory. The debate around intersectionality theory is very nuanced and complex, which is why I present a number of ways in which the term has been used in the US and in Europe. I also define how I understand intersectionality and explain how the theoretical framework will be applied in this study. I then introduce standpoint theory and explain my reason for applying this approach to my research.

The second chapter on theory (Chapter 5) is concerned with the development of organisational psychodynamics. This chapter discusses Melanie Klein's object relations theory, Isabel Menzies Lyth's social defense theory, and provides an overview of Wilfred Bion's psychoanalytic group dynamics as well as David Armstrong's 'organisation in the mind'. I use these theories to examine the way in which unconscious phantasy can influence relational dynamics within institutions. Here I am referring specifically to black women's inter-relationship with colleagues, their interaction within groups, and their perception and view of the workplace.

4.2 A black feminist perspective

Race, gender, history and other socially and culturally constructed categories are interweaving influences on the complexity of black women's experience of working in British prisons. Disregard of these factors reinforces black women's invisibility and misrepresentation within this occupation, and raises the following questions. With what resources is it possible to reverse this trend of invisibility and misrepresentation? How do you generate empirical data from research on black women, and how do you then frame it? It was the need to address this question of how to frame the empirical data that directed me towards black feminism, and intersectionality theory specifically. I hold that a black feminist conceptual framework is a useful intellectual tool and political praxis (theory and practice) for theorising black women's experience.

At this point, a definition of black feminism would be helpful for clarification. Black feminist theory examines the boundaries of sisterhood with white feminists in order to deal fully with the contradictions inherent in gender, race, and class within the context of a racist society (Humm, 2003). Tunisia Riley in her thesis elegantly describes the facets of black feminism when she states:

When we question the power structures that dictate our racial and gender identities, we are theorising. When we seek to empower ourselves, heal ourselves and others in spite of our circumstances, we are activists and advocates. When we describe our struggles as black women within the rhyme of poetry, upon a painter's canvas, through a photographer's lens and in the melody of song, we are artists and clever revolutionaries using our creative expression to subvert the power of our oppression.

(2009, p. 5)

Accordingly, this study aims to focus on black feminist theorising to offer a different insight into the experience of black women within the workplace, because black feminist theory focuses on experience that is both raced and gendered. In addition, this approach will allow me to place black women at the centre of knowledge production, thus illuminating the unique experience of black women that is lacking in much of British mainstream academia. This observation is supported by other scholars such as Heidi Mirza (1992) whose study, completed in the UK, provided an insight into the educational and employment experiences of young black women. Other UK scholars such as Dawn

Edge and Anne Rogers (2005); Amina Mama (1995) and Gail Lewis (1997) have used black women's experience as the focal point of their research.

Black feminist literature has shown there is an overwhelming focus of scholarship on women who are middle class, heterosexual, and white (Hill Collins, 1998; Lorde, 1984; Combahee River Collective, 1977). The lack of studies depicting black women's issues in gendered research and the social sciences field illustrates the marginalisation of black women (Hill Collins, 2008; Rollock, 2007; Buckley and Carter, 2004; Gunaratnam and Lewis, 2001; Mirza, 1997; Ladner, 1995; Crenshaw, 1991). I have chosen to apply intersectionality theory and standpoint theory because these theoretical paradigms will enable me to examine the complex systems of oppression that shape black women's work experience. The theory of intersectionality suggests that supposedly discrete forms of oppression are actually interconnected and shape, and are shaped by, one another. Therefore, in the prison context, knowing a black person works in a white-dominated organisation is insufficient information to describe their experience of racism; rather, it is also necessary to know the person's gender, his or her position within the organisation, etc. Thus, to fully understand the racialisation of black women, it is important to examine the ways in which racialising structures and social processes are shaped by gender and occupational positionality within the workplace.

4.3 Intersectionality: definition

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to present the different definitions of intersectionality; in fact scholars such as Jennifer Nash (2008) advocate against trying to establish one fixed definition of the theory. Instead, an overview of intersectionality theory will be presented.

Intersectionality is an analytical way of thinking, used to understand how socially and culturally constructed categories of discrimination and identity production interact on multiple levels to create systematic social inequality. People experience oppression in overlapping ways, not as separate and distinct entities that can be examined individually. The variables of race and gender are interweaving influences that can be used to grasp the complexity of women's lived experience in given times and places. At the same time, intersectionality is not prescriptive but rather can be conceptualised as 'a loose set of ideas about how to undertake research' (Dhamoon, 2008, p. 3).

I apply Patricia Hill Collins's conception of intersectionality as the basis for my study because she emphasises that intersectionality is a collective set of ideas shared by feminists, rather than a rigid theoretical paradigm. In her view:

intersectional scholarship and/or practice seemingly pivot on a loose set of shared ideas, namely, 1) how race, class, gender, and sexuality constitute intersecting systems of power; 2) how specific social inequalities reflect these power relations from one setting to the next; 3) how identities of race, gender, are socially

constructed within multiple systems of power; and 4) how social problems and their remedies are similarly constructed within intersecting systems of power (2009, p. 1).

Hill Collins' definition draws attention to the term intersection which refers to one line cutting through another line, thus denoting the way in which two or more socially constructed categories cross over, such as race and gender, etc., and highlights how they play a role in shaping lived experience that together leads to inequality.

4.4 The origin of intersectionality

Intersectionality was first coined by Kimberle Crenshaw when she focused on workplace discrimination from within a feminist critical legal studies approach. Crenshaw argued that black women's injuries could not be wholly addressed by the existing doctrinal structure that separated out race-based and gender-based discrimination. That is, that the existing legal apparatus renders the court unable to see 'that black women can experience discrimination in ways that are both similar to and different from those experienced by white women and black men' (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 149). Crenshaw argued that the fixed mutually exclusive categorisations of race and gender marginalised black women, not just in employment but in all areas of their lives.

Intersectionality is a useful tool for challenging legislation. It is also a useful analytical framework to analyse the way in which black women's positionality within society and

organisations is a result of their position within multiple categories, which in turn leads to inequality. Hence, this theoretical paradigm is able to grasp the complexity of inequalities on societal as well as subjective levels.

4.5 Theorising intersectionality

This section uses feminist literature to examine some current debates about intersectionality. I draw on various scholars work such as Patricia Hill Collins (2009); Baukje Prins (2006); Nira Yuval-Davis (2006); Leslie McCall (2005); and Kimberle Crenshaw (1991) to examine what it means to practice intersectionality as a theoretical and methodological approach to inequality. My discussion will first aim to clarify the differences in how scholars who have explicitly worked with the concept of intersectionality have employed it, and then consider how I can apply this tool to inform my understanding of black women's Prison Service employees' power relationships and interpersonal interaction.

It is worth noting that there are significant differences in how intersectionality is treated in the UK and the US. Prins defines the US intersectionality approach, referring specifically to Crenshaw's (1989) work as 'systemic', stating that 'the meanings of social identities are determined by racism, classism, sexism, etc., which are taken to be static and rigid systems of domination' (Prins, 2006, p. 281). Prins asserts that European feminist scholars take a constructionist interpretation of intersectionality, by asserting that 'British scholars focus on the dynamic and relational aspects of social identity' (2006, p. 279). This perspective relates to system-centred approaches. 'System-centred'

infers that intersectionality shapes the entire social system and thus goes beyond looking at specific inequalities in institutions; rather, the analysis focuses on processes that are fully interactive, historically co-determining, and complex.

Systemic/structuralist approach to intersectionality

According to Crenshaw, the location of black women at the intersection of race and gender makes their experience structurally and 'qualitatively different than that of white women' (1991, p. 1245).

The famous phrase 'All the women are white, all the blacks are men, but some of us are brave', depicted in the title of an important reader by Gloria Hull et al. (1982) encapsulates the exclusion many black women encountered in discourses about gender and race. According to Beverley Bryan et al. (1985) black women were prominent in civil rights movements and challenging black struggles across the world, yet their contributions were overshadowed by black men. Bryan et al. (1985) also assert that black women's involvement in organising feminist activism was overshadowed by white women.

This exclusion forms the basis for African-American and UK scholars' concerted effort to challenge the unwarranted universalising of white, middle-class women's experience as being the 'only' experience (hooks, 1981), and instead introduce a new form of theorising which focusses on how lived experience of oppression cannot be separated into

discreet categories of race or gender, but rather are simultaneous and linked (Glenn, 2002; Brewer, 1993; Grewal et al., 1988).

An intersectionality framework provided black women with a 'voice' and an analytical tool to examine and theorise the way in which race and gender intersect to both construct sound location and inform experience. Hill Collins' (1990) work illustrates, for instance, that a black woman's experience is a result of the intersection of gender and race, thus these different elements form and inform each other. This is the essence of Crenshaw's work.

From this perspective, I do not view race and gender as multiple identities because they are not layered on top of one another or parallel to each other; rather, they are intersectional, formed of different elements at the same time. They are an alloy of social elements that make for a particular subject and related embodied experience. This way of thinking turns the lens on processes occurring within race-gender subgroups and shifts their experience from the margins to the focal point (Hill Collins, 1990). From this perspective race is viewed as gendered and gender as raced.

Constructionist approach to intersectionality

European feminist scholars have challenged US feminist scholars by claiming that black women have been used as 'quintessential intersectional subjects' (Nash, 2008, p. 1), as a result of the focus being specifically on race and gender and that this has resulted in the essentialisation of one social group's lived experience. Some European feminist scholars

have applied intersectionality to show that social categories and their relationship with each other are problematised under the assumption that they continually and mutually constitute each other (Lutz et al., 2011; Yuval-Davis, 2006). This approach is therefore concerned with understanding the dynamic forces (Yuval-Davis, 2006; Staunaes, 2003) that affect the daily reality of individuals.

According to Dorthe Staunaes, intersectionality is a dynamic process as categories are seen as the effect of behaviour and are constantly constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed in the ongoing flow of interaction and institutional practice (Staunaes, 2003). The focus of analysis therefore, is on the dynamics of identity formation in light of complex inequalities (Prins, 2006). In simple terms, this implies that one form of oppression can be shaped by, and can shape, other forms of oppression, but it is ongoing, unstable and a contingent process.

I will now refer to scholars who have applied a constructionist approach to intersectionality to provide an example of this perspective. Nira Yuval-Davis applies intersectionality to investigate 'axes' of difference (Yuval-Davis, 2006), which involved her applying intersectionality to analyse social stratification as a whole, believing that social differences are mutually constitutive, that is, that gender, race/ethnicity and class are overlapping characteristics that modify social divisions within society, in contrast to viewing social divisions as an additive, arguing that there are many facets of social difference and axes of power that need to be analysed (Yuval-Davis, 2011).

In sum, what unifies the different strands of intersectionality is the idea that only by treating social categories as relational can illuminating and fruitful knowledge be produced (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Although scholars such as Prins (2006) have criticised systemic approaches to intersectionality, in arguing that it provides limited representation of the complexities faced by individuals as a result of the way in which categories are approached as implicitly part of a structure of domination and marginalisation, I think that a systemic analysis of intersectionality, the way that gender, race hierarchies and inequalities are woven into the organisational fabric of the British Prison Service, can tell us something about the complex system of domination which occurs within this organisational space. A person is not simply oppressed or privileged but can be simultaneously privileged and oppressed by different aspects of their identities. Thus, black women Prison Service employees are privileged by the fact that they are employees and at the same time oppressed by the fact that they are black and woman. For the purpose of my study I am particularly interested in giving a voice to participants to understand how they perceive their peculiar occupational position, which may be dramatically different to white men/women and black men. This is an expression of intersectionality; that is, I take into consideration the intersection of race and gender as significant elements of this group's lived experience.

In the next section, I will analyse the idea of double consciousness by showing how it occurs as a result of the constant negotiations involved in the lived experience of intersectionality. My discussion will expand the application of intersectionality by

relating it to the theory of double consciousness to increase our understanding and theorise around power and subjectivity.

4.6 Double consciousness

Double consciousness is a term coined by William Edward Burghart Du Bois (1994 [1903]) written in an African-American context. This concept is applied here to explain in more detail the negative feelings such as the burden black women may experience as a result of being black and female within the prison context. Du Bois used the term 'double consciousness' to describe an individual whose identity is divided into several facets. His most prominent statement comprises the following:

It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, – an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two un-reconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder (1994[1903], p. 12).

This 'two-ness' to which Du Bois refers is a result of being black as well as American, that is, that African-Americans are socially constructed by the dominant group and thus have two selves: 'black' first, and American second – two identities rather than one unified identity. This double consciousness forces African-Americans to look at

themselves constantly through the eyes of others, which is what Du Bois meant when he talked about 'this sense of looking at one's self through the eyes of others'.

This can lead to black people suffering from a damaged self-image shaped by the perception and treatment of white people, and black people's lives might be shaped by stereotypes perpetuated by mainstream culture. The implication of Du Bois' notion is influential because not only does it succinctly describe the plight of being black and American, but it rings true to the essence of what it means to be black in Western countries such as America and also in Britain today.

In my application of double consciousness, I will expand on this notion by relating it to black women's gendered and racialised subjectivities within prisons. Black women are fully aware of their gender and race and may/may not have encountered discrimination, but at some point they will come to realise that their gender and race is a problem within the white male- dominated organisation of prisons. Like Du Bois' claim of the difficulties encountered by African-Americans as a result of their dual identity, this same realisation with regard to gender, race and occupational status can have a profound impact on the way black women perceive and relate to the organisation and their colleagues. It can lead to feelings of not belonging, being an 'outsider within' (Lorde, 1984) or being 'othered' (Du Bois, 1994).

The British Prison Service reflects a white, masculine culture. Bias, stereotyping, prejudice and unfair sanctions on the part of white employees contribute to racial inequality (Edgar and Martin, 2004). Prisons are dominated by white men who are therefore unaware of their privileged experience, which inadvertently has historically devalued employees such as black women, who are members of gendered and racially marginalised groups (Alfred, 1992; Zimmer, 1986). Therefore, the notion of double consciousness can be applied to examine how black women Prison Service employees may see themselves as they know the dominant group sees them: as subordinates and not belonging because they are both black and woman. Indeed, this may place pressure on black women to identify themselves in two social worlds, and they may find it difficult to unify their black identity with their gender identity within prisons because only one identity at a time is recognised. This is replicated in prison literature and research, which investigates and documents just one social category or form of oppression at a given time. Thus black women as Prison Service employees simultaneously embrace, yet also challenge and redefine, what it means to be black and woman in the British prison context, but this is not documented in prison occupational literature.

I will now develop Du Bois' (1994) original application of double consciousness into the terrain of the psychosocial to explore the tension black women encounter as a result of their double identities: their gendered racialised subjectivity and their occupational subjectivity. I want to apply a different way of conceptualising human subjectivity by bringing together Du Bois' notion of double consciousness and Klein's object relations theory. Both are concepts of identity acquisition through the process of introjections. Du

Bois' concept holds that a dominant gaze initiates subjectivity formation, whereas Kleinians are interested in inner images of the self and other, and how they manifest themselves in interpersonal situations. Both paradigms illustrate how the newly formed subject feels split. The mental strategy of viewing oneself through the eyes of the dominant group might be experienced as causing a split allegiance between black women's multiple identities. This may produce anxiety that needs to be guarded against by initiating psychic defenses. This idea leads me to consider the impact of black women's double identity and the effects of having to constantly sacrifice one identity in order to conform to dominant standards (Bell, 1990). It is this conflicting internal and external reality that I want to capture in the data and understand.

Throughout my study I place black women at the centre of my research and use their everyday experiences as a means to ascertain knowledge. I combine intersectionality theory and its emphasis on the intersection of race and gender as simultaneous forces that impact on black women's everyday lives, together with Du Bois' notion of double consciousness, and relate these concepts to standpoint theory to examine how experience, knowledge and behaviours are shaped by the social groups to which individuals belong. Essentially I focus on the effects of entwined racialised and gendered experience, which creates a specific subject position and thus black women's experience (Lewis, 1997).

4.7 Feminist standpoint theory

Feminist standpoint theory became prominent in the early 1980s and generated an alternative way to investigate issues around difference and feminine subjectivity. This theory asserts that the power of a standpoint is embedded in its ability to name experience that arises from the angle of vision on the social world and the self that is accustomed by a specific location or positionality. For example, Nancy Hartsock (1981) shows through her description of the sexual division of labour how social relations structure the way women understand and interact with the world. Hartsock argues that knowledge–power relations perpetuate inequality by privileging certain knowledge, specifically patriarchal views and interpretation of the world.

Feminists such as Dorothy Smith (1988) have used standpoint theory to develop a sociological method from the standpoint of women to counteract the universal portrayal of men's standpoint. Sandra Harding, (1991, 1986) featured feminist standpoint theory in her two books on science and feminism. Hill Collins (2000) articulated a specifically black feminist standpoint. The theorists I refer to all make the same claim: that those in marginalised positions tend to express a more objective view of reality than members of privileged groups, because they are socially situated in ways that make it more possible for them to be aware of things in relation to their experience than those who are non-marginalised.

Julia Woods, in outlining the purpose of feminist standpoint theory, states:

The specific foci of feminist standpoint theory are: a) identifying cultural values and power dynamics that account for the subordination of girls and women, and b) highlighting the distinct knowledge cultivated by activities that are typically assigned to females (2009, p. 1).

Standpoint theory is a useful way to understand the point of view of a group of individuals who, because of shared social experiences, are constituted as a group. In addition, this approach may be used to show the way in which individuals' location within society shapes the way in which they view the world and are conditioned by the collective specificities of their place in social structures and discourse. The theory is renowned for its attempt to understand the world from the standpoint of marginalised groups in society, and concerned with the authority generated by people's knowledge and the power such authority has to shape people's opinions in daily life (Bowell, 2011).

According to Woods:

All formulations of standpoint theory contend that a standpoint arises when an individual recognises and challenges cultural values and power relations that contribute to the subordination or oppression of particular groups (2009, p. 1).

Woods's assertion illustrates the conscious aspect of the theory and highlights the factors that define people's standpoint, showing that it is based on a person's social location and

subjective experience, and that it is shared with others who occupy a similar social location. The quotation from Woods also highlights the notion at the centre of the development of a specific standpoint. This recognition of the impact standpoint theory may have when a group has a clear standpoint and acts for a change from that position is shown in Tracey Reynolds's (2002) study completed in the UK. The study documented how a group of black women mobilised themselves at a localised and small-scale level systematically to challenge discriminatory conditions and practice in their everyday working lives. This is an indication of how standpoint theory may be explicitly political, that is, that the black women who Reynolds refers to in her article used their shared concern about their children's welfare to change their organisations' working hours so that they could collect their children from school. This demonstrates this group's standpoint as the women had a clearer view of working hours and the impact it was having on their role as mothers in comparison to the privileged group, by virtue of how they understood their experience. This study demonstrates the power relations that exist between men and women within the workplace with regard to childcare needs.

Feminist standpoint theory is particularly interested in the issue of power relations, their contestation and the generalisation of knowledge. Annica Kronsell states:

A central and useful part of standpoint theory is the argument that important knowledge is generated through the struggle of the deprived and less privileged; it is produced through the dynamics of the experience of being oppressed.

Knowledge grounded in women's lived experiences can provide situated knowledge with which to challenge dominant and repressive social practices (2005, p. 288).

Sandra Harding (1991) asserts that a perspective from the lives of the less powerful may provide a more objective view than a perspective from the lives of the more powerful. People who are marginalised are required to understand the way oppression operates from the perspective of being oppressed and that of the oppressor to survive within social structures in which they are oppressed. However, this perspective is not necessarily available to the dominant group as a result of their privilege position. The social groups to which we belong shape what we know and how we communicate. In order to understand women's experience and use their experience to produce knowledge, standpoint feminists have used this approach to 'situated knowledge' (Hill Collins, 1990) to understand and explain the social world from the vantage point of women's lives. It is from this perspective that I aim to challenge traditional prison occupation research, by using black women's narratives about their experience of being gendered and racial subjects within a white male dominated environment to present another angle of working in this space. In doing so, I will create a new discourse and a different perspective of being a British Prison Service employee.

4.8 Black feminist standpoint theory

Black feminist standpoint theory places black women at the centre of knowledge production by recognising the importance of including first-person black female-based narratives in theoretical analysis.

Black feminists expanded feminist standpoint theory that argued that women's narratives held a different knowledge and viewpoint to men with regard to gender subordination, by including race and class. Scholars such as Hill Collins (1990) successfully argued that black women needed an alternative epistemology that included an analysis of race, class and sexuality as interwoven forms of oppression because of black and white women's social disparities and the fact that they also have different perspectives on their lived realities as a result of the intersection of race and gender.

Hill Collins' (1990) work further highlighted that white female researchers tend to exclude the standpoints and voices of black women, women who are disabled, lesbians, poor women, and women from Third World nations. She locates black feminist thought in the unique literary traditions forged by black women such as bell hooks (1981) and Audre Lorde (1984), as well as in the everyday experience of ordinary black women. Furthermore, black feminist thought is rooted in black women's intellectual tradition nurtured by black women's community involvement, for example in the work of the Combahee Collective (1977).

Criticisms of the feminist movement have been made by black feminists such as Yasmin Gunaratnam and Gail Lewis (2001), Gail Lewis (1997) and bell hooks (1990) in their respective works. They have strongly argued that feminist theory and feminist movements disregarded the issues of race as a result of their lack of understanding of white supremacy. Black feminist standpoint theory has challenged the dominant discourse.

According to Reynolds (2002) black feminist standpoint theory provides a theoretical understanding of black women's everyday experience. This approach to understanding gendered racialisation provides a new perspective that challenges the normative discourse by taking into account the intersection of race and gender. This is not to suggest that this perspective implies that black women are a homogeneous group; on the contrary, it is significant that this theory recognises that although black women share a racial and gender identity, they differ in terms of many of their social locations and even in how they understand race and gender to impact on their lives. I apply standpoint theory to my study because I am of the opinion that knowledge is situated and perspectival, and, as pointed out by feminist scholars who have applied standpoint theory to their work, there are multiple standpoints from which knowledge is produced (Hekman, 1997).

4.9 The application of intersectionality and standpoint theory

My aim in applying intersectionality theory and standpoint theory is twofold. First, I want to provide a framework for rethinking what it means to be a Prison Service employee by

presenting an alternative perspective. That is, I plan to examine the experience of working in the British Prison Service from the standpoint of black women to show the place from which this group of employees see and understand their social reality within this particular occupational space. Second, I want to use intersectionality theory beyond its most basic form, that is, to examine the ways that gender and race combined creates a complexity of oppression, which is different to what white men/women and black men encounter. In addition, the concept of double consciousness creates a unique situation for black women who find themselves located at the intersection of race, gender and occupational status, and, in the words of Du Bois, find themselves having to 'always looking at one's self through the eyes of others' (Du Bois, 1994, p. 12).

This can create tension, both consciously and unconsciously. Black women are not the axiomatic Prison Service employee, and some black women are aware of their marginalised position. I put forward the idea that black women's experience occurs on three levels: individual, group, and organisational. Therefore, my aim is to understand how gender and racial inequality function on all three levels. Henceforth, my study looks at all three levels of oppression, by placing black women at the centre of the organisational context in which the study is located, and provides insights into where they sit within the 'matrix of domination' (Hill Collins, 2000) within this work environment. I am following Hill Collins' (2000) approach, in her analysis of black women, whereby she privileges the unique 'ways of knowing' that are held by black women over and above the institutionalised forms of knowledge that have been used as tools of domination.

To conclude, this thesis is focused on the structural formation of being black, woman and employee within British prisons. I have illustrated this by relating black feminist theory to other ways of thinking about black women who are marginalised because of the intersection of race and gender, and relate this view to Du Bois' (1994) notion of double consciousness, which I have used to think about how the multiple identities of the participants create conscious and phantased tension and conflict for this group.

The discussions in this chapter have outlined my rationale for applying intersectionality theory and standpoint theory to my study. I have described how I plan to draw on the theoretical aspect of these frameworks and have shown how both concepts can be used to understand black women's experience within the British Prison Service context, as they illuminate the interwoven characteristics of being black, woman and employee. In doing so, this study presents a unique angle of lived reality, based on the standpoint of a group of employees who encounter inequality as a result of their gendered racialisation. Bearing in mind that prisons are complex institutions with intricate power structures and relationship dynamics, there is an on-going process in which black women experience their world, strive to master it, and make sense of it.

The theories discussed in this chapter, provide a new approach to explore and understand what it means and feels like to work in the British Prison Service, by looking at the influence of socially constructed categories such as race and gender on the daily reality of

black women. In the following chapter, I explore an alternative approach to understanding black women's experience by applying psychoanalytical schools of thought, specifically organisational psychodynamics, with the aim of gaining an insight into how the psychic and the social can be understood together and which can be used to increase awareness of the psychosocial experience of black women as gendered and racialised subjects working in the British Prison Service.

5 The Employee, the Group and the Task: A Psychodynamic

Approach to Examining Prisons

This chapter explores some of the mechanisms that underline the relational fields that occur within the British Prison Service that are constructed, experienced and enacted in the context of organisational boundaries, roles, tasks and processes. The Prison Service can be understood as a set of organisational dynamics that give rise to different relational constellations. I put forward the idea that gendered racialisation, the making of subject positions, and the making of real and phantasised relationships are constantly played through interactions between individuals. By focusing on organisational dynamics, I will show how they can illuminate some of the destructive processes that may occur when a particular subject – black woman – interacts with her white colleagues. In light of this, it is argued that a psychodynamic approach is a useful framework for examining the inner and external world of individuals, who, within an organisational setting, are part of the relational dynamics that are influenced by the psychic and social meanings of difference of race and gender.

Psychodynamics is defined as:

the focus of psychological or emotional pain – often thought of as anxiety and conflict – but most fundamentally, simply pain. Life is thought of as a difficult

and demanding process as the psyche is built and continues to develop in the struggle to deal with it. What is 'dynamic' is the turbulence created in the currents of mental life by these struggles. Means of avoiding pain is created: ways of seeing, thinking, feeling, and behaving can all serve this purpose. These are the mechanisms of defence (Leiper and Maltby, 2004, p. 13).

The application of psychodynamics can provide insights into the connections between the psychological mechanisms of individuals, their behaviour, and their effect on workplace culture (Walsh et al., 2011). Therefore conscious and unconscious processes play a fundamental role in organisational dynamics as organisations are made up of a collection of people.

One of the main obstacles for individuals, and thus their social relations within organisations, is the strong force prevalent within social structures that is devised to contain the anxiety formed by fear of difference, which may be a result of the influence of psychic, social and organisational dynamics. The differences around questions of gender and racial markers have psychic and social dimensions that are acted out in organisational settings. Put simply, gender and racial, social and psychic manifestations are played out in organisations; they constitute the organisation, and the organisation and its dynamics constitute them. Therefore people who work in large, diverse organisations mutually experience each other and each is also the object of the other's experience (Leonidas et al., 2005; Clayton, 1995). One of the key points I would like to emphasise here is that people meet each other as people differentiated by gender and race,

operational and non-operational status, and other hierarchal divisions of status and task, all within an organisational context in which difference is to be avoided. Another key point to note is that it is the organisation that is the form of analysis, not (pathologised) individuals. These interactions at times are experienced unconsciously as persecutory anxiety (Klein, 1935), primitive in nature, involving paranoid fears of being attacked and annihilated, which means that the source of the anxiety needs to be controlled and destroyed. Anxiety, derived from the fear aroused from the dynamics of inter-relationships between individuals and groups within the workplace, often activates organisational defensive mechanisms (Stevenson, 2012; Bion, 2001 [1961]; Menzies Lyth, 1960), such as splitting, introjection, projection and projective identification (Klein, 1932), in an effort to reduce anxiety.

An explanation put forward for the activation of defenses to avoid anxiety within an organisation is put forward by Laurence Gould et al. (2006) who quote Otto Fenichel (1946). They assert that institutions are created to satisfy individual and group needs and to accomplish required tasks. However, these institutions become 'external realities comparatively independent of individuals, which affect individuals in significant emotional and psychological ways' (Gould et al., 2006, p. 3). This analysis is interesting because it draws attention to conscious and unconscious ways in which people experience working in organisations.

The theoretical perspective of organisational psychodynamics provides a framework to examine organisational life at different levels, for instance, at individual, group and organisational levels. For this reason, organisations as systems have their own lives that include conscious and unconscious activities together with subsystems, for example, levels of authority, reporting relationships, its objectives and primary task, division of labour and so forth, which relate to, and mirror, one another (Obholzer and Roberts, 1994; Hirschhorn, 1993; Miller, 1993). In addition, the psychodynamics of organisations may also be 'a consequence of unresolved or unrecognised organisational difficulties' (Gould et al., 2006, p. 3). Gould et al. explain how the application of a psychodynamic framework may illuminate:

the notion that observable and structural features of an organisation – even quite rational and functional ones – continually interact with its members at all levels in a manner that stimulates particular patterns of individual and group dynamic processes. In turn, such processes may determine how particular features of the organisation come to be created, such as its distinctive culture, how work is conceived, organised, and managed, and how it is structured (2006, p. 3).

The dynamic processes that occur in organisations, whether conscious or unconscious, are significant because they highlight defense mechanisms developed to deal with the anxiety produced in relation to the primary task and the difficulties in collaborating with others to accomplish it (Menzies Lyth, 1988). This can be demonstrated by the way in which individuals adopt various defensive mechanisms to avoid mental pain and conflict,

or to control unacceptable impulses. From a psychosocial perspective, this also needs to be understood in relation to the social organisation of differences of gender and race. The analytical project, therefore, is to explore social, psychic, and emotional processes simultaneously within the organisation.

Organisational psychodynamics has made many contributions to our understanding of social institutions, and has provided an insight into how individuals affect institutions and how institutions affect individuals. Psychoanalysts such as David Armstrong (2005); Robert Hinshelwood and Wilhelm Skogstad (2000); Anton Obholzer and Vega Zagier Roberts (1994); Wilfred Bion (1961); Isabel Menzies Lyth (1960); and Elliott Jacques (1955) have found that institutions have an overwhelming influence on individuals within them, and that individuals exert an influence on institutions. I refer to these scholars' work to elucidate the key elements of their theories, with the goal of examining how concepts derived from understanding individuals' behaviour can be applied to help to understand the intricate network of relationships within organisations. It is important to note that the contribution and application of psychoanalysis to organisational psychodynamics have varied according to the approach used by theorists and others who have developed Freud's initial ideas into highly complex theories of object relations. It is my intention to refer to the work of these scholars to set the foundation for my analysis and discussions in the data chapters. I will begin by providing an outline of organisational psychodynamics for discussing the origin of this theoretical framework. I then describe object relations theory, focusing specifically on Melanie Klein's pioneering work, and also draw on various Kleinian approaches to understand organisational psychodynamics.

Finally, I embark on a discussion about the unconscious tasks of prisons and the multiple tasks of prisons to look at how they create anxiety and tension amongst prison staff.

5.1 Psychoanalytic roots

Organisational psychodynamics stems from the theory and practice of psychoanalysis. This in turn stems from Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theories about individuals and their relation to their environment. Psychoanalytic theory offers a distinctive way of thinking about the human mind and how it responds to psychological distress, placing emphasis on internal or psychic conflict and the subject's attempt to manage this conflict.

Psychoanalysis usually focuses on an analysis of an individual, which may provide a limited insight into a person's reality. To gain a fuller understanding of how a person experiences and makes sense of the world, there is a need to explore the individual in relation to his or her interaction with other people and the wider socio-cultural context, taking into account his or her conscious and unconscious behaviour. In light of this assertion, 'psychodynamics associated with the person at work in large, complex, and formal organisations, and the dynamics found within the situations where most people go every day to seek success and fulfilment' (Czander, 1993, p. 6) can tell us something about the way people experience their daily reality.

A psychodynamic perspective can provide us with an insight into the conscious and unconscious life of organisations, because it focuses on groups and organisational behaviour that influence various structures, processes and individuals. In simple terms, this paradigm simultaneously works from the inside out and the outside in, providing a holistic understanding by highlighting the conscious and unconscious phantasies associated with working in organisations. Therefore, by studying unconscious behaviours and dynamics it may lead to a deeper understanding of organisational behaviour (Obholzer and Roberts, 1994; Czander, 1993; Hirschhorn, 1993; Miller, 1993).

It is important to note that a psychodynamic perspective can be used to show how unconscious processes affect everyday activities. This approach draws attention to the source of motivational forces that drive human action by taking into account what is 'within' the inner world of individuals, including their emotions, relationships between individuals, and in their 'reality', which is created by the dynamics of groups (Neumann and Hirschhorn, 1999). Human behaviour and relationships are thus shaped by both conscious and unconscious influences, and different parts of the unconscious mind are in constant struggle. The psychodynamic perspective I am developing here suggests that organisations such as prisons and the dominant staff group (white men) are not primed to embrace racial and gender difference. Thus, when black women become employees it produces anxiety, provoking identity change both to the group and the organisation. To overcome the anxiety produced by black women's presence, individuals and organisations engage in practices to preserve the organisation's existing employee identity and structures.

Larry Hirschhorn and Carole Barnett postulate that:

People engage in self-defeating activity and are unaware of the character of their motives. In such situations, people are driven by unconscious fantasies, not by rational calculations or political interests. In other words, unacknowledged fantasies and wishes shape behaviour (1993, p. xiv).

This is an indication that unconscious ideas and phantasies have a determining and motivating influence on people's conscious thoughts, their emotions and actions (Gabriel and Griffiths, 2002). This makes organisations complex and difficult to examine because organisations are dynamic, that is, the processes are dynamic. I am using the term 'dynamic processes' to show that within systems there are relationships between the parts; thus changes in one part of any system will affect the other parts (Hirschhorn, 1993). In addition, the parts of an organisation may be in tension with one another. In simple terms, an organisation is continuously influenced by people, and people are influenced by the organisation. Hence, organisations and the people within them are shaped by dynamic processes. I therefore draw on the psychodynamics of organisations to examine the tacit, implicit, and unconscious dimensions of organisational life. This will enable me to start from the viewpoint that an individual takes up his or her role at work by drawing on both individual history and the organisational context which help to define a role, its boundary and the resources available to take it up.

5.2 Object relations

Object relations theory is a division of psychoanalytic theorising that has a central role in British psychoanalysis (Segal, 1973). This theory places more emphasis on interpersonal relationships, and stresses the infant's relationship with the mother during the early stage of development.

Klein believed that infants begin life with an inherited predisposition to reduce the anxiety they experience as a consequence of the clash between the life instinct and the death instinct. According to Klein, from the beginning of the infant's life it experiences the world with intolerable anxieties, and Klein infers that this is related to the infant's own death instincts. These 'persecutory' anxieties are felt in the infant's own bodily needs, as well as by the external frustration experienced with regard to those needs that are overwhelming to the infant. For the infant to be able to overcome these anxieties, the infant applies defenses – introjection, projection, splitting and projective identification – to protect against anxiety. The infant relates to the external world by deploying defense mechanisms to protect the ego from the destructiveness of the death drive.

The earliest object relations of the child are relations with images of body parts, that is, breast, penis, the womb, etc., which operate as 'universal mechanisms' (Klein, 1932, p. 195), without the child necessarily having experienced the actual organs in reality. These

images of objects take in aspects of the real objects they represent in the world later in the child's life. Klein further extended the principle of a priori images of objects to whole objects.

The main presupposition of object relations is its 'focus on the interactions with others, that is, on the problems of object relations' (Greenberg and Mitchell, 1983, p. 2).

'Objects' in psychoanalysis refers to people, in particular the mother, and focuses on relationships between people. Ramon Ganzarian writes:

It [object relations] focuses on the internal fantasied world of psychic reality, more specifically on the exchanges between the self and the internal images of others, or mental residues of their relations with the self. These mental representations of others – often called 'internal objects' – can trigger behavioural responses, as if they were either persecutors ('bad' objects) or sources of security ('good' objects) (2007, p. 97).

Ganzarain's description of object relations reveals the significance of 'phantasised' 'internal' and 'external' 'objects'. This idea was central to Klein's concepts. Klein postulated that children develop parallel phantasies concerning their own insides, a place similar to their mother's interior, which is populated by body parts, substances, people, etc. She argued that phantasies of internal presence begin in the first months of life. In developing her theory, she postulated that representations of all experiences and relations

with significant others also become internalised, in an effort to preserve and protect them. This leads to the development of complex sets of internalised object relations, phantasies and anxieties in relation to the state of an individual's behaviour, mood and sense of self in adulthood. From a psychoanalytic perspective, phantasy (with a 'ph') is dominated by unconscious processes, thus deviating from fantasies that are conscious and relate to 'a fanciful mental image, typically one in which a person often dwells and which reflects their conscious or unconscious wishes' (Oxford Dictionary, 2010).

Object relations theory puts forward the notion that we are driven to form relationships with others. From a Kleinian perspective this makes us vulnerable, because we become dependent on the objects; we need them; we cannot control them; we love them and hate them; we become angry and want to destroy them, and then feel guilty and want to make amends (Likierman, 2002). We also recognise that they are not us; they are different to us, but nevertheless there are similarities. In applying this theory, I intend to provide an insight into how we (black women) relate to people who are not us, and how we imagine people relating to us who think we are not them, that is, white people's perception of black people. I am using Klein's notion of phantasy because it is used in organisational psychodynamics theory. What is of particular interest is how phantasy influences people's experiences, perceptions and portrayal of their everyday lives. The main focus here is to explore how object relations theory will be used to address the following research question: what mechanisms do black women deploy to help them negotiate working in a white, male-dominated organisation? I am particularly interested in exploring the psychosocial experience; by this I am referring to the external social

experience, that is, the relational dynamics that occur within institutions at individual, group and organisational levels, as well as the internal experience, whereby I am referring to internal life. I will take into account the idea that phantasy can influence the behaviour and experience of individuals, and use this concept to gain a different angle of black women's experience. Here, I am talking about how it 'feels' to be an employee, rather than what it is 'like' to be an employee. This means analysing the phantasy world of the participants as well as their external world of the organisation, and highlighting the merger of these two worlds in their narratives. I refer to Juliet Mitchell to elaborate my point further:

Phantasy emanates from within and imagines what it is without, it offers an unconscious commentary [...] through its ability to phantasise the baby tests out, primitively 'thinks' about, its experience of inside and outside (1986, p. 23).

Mitchell is alluding to the intermingling of the psychic world and the external reality, and thus the perceived reality of the individual. She is also articulating a Kleinian perspective of phantasy by highlighting its origin; that is, she makes reference to the fact that phantasy stems from the young infant's mental life, which is a constellation formed by the interaction with the external world and external objects, and the internal world. This indicates that the unconscious phantasy is immersed with 'internal' objects. Klein explains that the 'internal' or 'inner' (these terms are used interchangeably) world refers to the deep unconscious phantasies experienced in the mind of the young infant. This

inner world corresponds with the actual experiences and impressions gained from people in the external world (Klein, 1940). The infant uses the experiences from its interaction with external objects – the mother – to reinforce and validate the unconscious, phantasised world. The ‘external’ world contains external objects and includes conscious interactions with these objects. Klein postulates that the infant creates two worlds: an ‘internal’ and an ‘external’ world. In both worlds the objects are duplicates of each other. However, there is a distinction between ‘real’ / external mother / external object and phantasised internal mother / internal object, which means there is an external mother and an internal mother; every object is duplicated. Objects live and die; they are real in both worlds. Julia Segal writes:

in these phantasies, people and parts of people live and die inside and outside the self; move around; give rise to enormous gratification and equally enormous fear, jealousy, or envy; are pushed from one person to another, regardless of behaviour (1992, p. 31).

This implies that there is a continuous interaction between the internal world and the external world, experienced mainly as visceral sensations and urges (Isaacs, 1952), which leads to anxiety that needs to be defended against.

In the following sections, I will outline the four defense mechanisms that are initiated to protect the individual from anxiety and that are central to understanding Klein's work.

They are: splitting, introjection, projection and projective identification.

Splitting

Klein's work described how the infant interacts with objects by splitting the object into good or bad. She believed that infants perceive all objects as either good or bad, and used the mother's breast as a means to describe this phenomenon. (It is worth noting here that Klein was not necessarily referring to the actual breast but to the feeding object.) Hence, splitting is a mental process by which two separate and contradictory versions of reality can co-exist. This defense mechanism can be viewed as the first defense mechanism in a series of other defenses. Splitting in phantasy helps the infant to distinguish between good and bad (Segal, 2004). This process enables the child to make sense of the world and of its own experiences. For example, the infant phantasises about a 'good' breast which is nourishing, loving and comforting, but when the child is hungry the hunger is experienced as an attack by a 'bad' breast.

Introjection and projection

Introjection and projection describe unconscious actions. Perhaps they are the most fundamental of the defense mechanisms as they are two concepts that are interwoven in Klein's object relations theory. They are concepts used to describe how the infant's

psychic development occurs, how the infant makes sense of its external world, and how the infant interacts with its internal and external world (Hinshelwood, 1991[1989]; Segal, 1973; Klein, 1932). They are not discrete concepts, and they underpin object relations theory in two ways. First they show how the infant develops relations with its objects (both part and whole objects) and second they are defense mechanisms against anxiety. The object that is split in this way is the internal object. The ego introjects external objects that are the source of pleasure and expels outside of itself that which causes displeasure. In simple terms, the child's phantasies introject parts of his or her parents' bodies (the breast, the penis, etc.), and the parents are split into gratifying good objects and frustrating bad objects. Projection, on the other hand, is based on an unconscious phantasy of expulsion, of 'getting rid of' destructive feelings directed 'on to' the object that threatened the relation with the object.

Projective identification

Projective identification follows on from introjection and projection. That is, the ego develops through its interactions with the external world by introjecting objects, perceiving its value, making judgements, then deciding whether to incorporate it into the self or to project it back into the external world. This is an unconscious process and happens without the individual being aware of the process. Aspects of the self are projected into an external object, subtly pressuring the object to behave in ways that conform to the projection. Thus, parts of the self are felt to reside inside the object and

may include anxieties of being trapped, phantasies of controlling the object from within, or of evacuating what is deemed undesirable.

In the next section, I will refer to Klein's notion of 'positions' and introduce two of her most influential formulations: the paranoid–schizoid position and the depressive position.

5.3 Melanie Klein's positions

Klein describes the paranoid–schizoid position and the depressive position as phases of development that occur during the early months of an infant's life. The term 'position' was chosen by Klein to emphasise the specific configuration of object relations, anxieties and defenses that begin in early infancy and persist throughout life (Likierman, 2002). That is, they are not stages through which one passes only once but positions which oscillate in the process of mental functioning throughout life.

Paranoid–schizoid position

Klein first introduced the notion of the paranoid–schizoid position in 1946, when she began to describe the infant's first few months of life. Klein's view of the early stages of life was that infants experience frightening phantasies of annihilation and the constant threat of attack (Segal, 2004). It was believed that the fear of annihilation was felt in the infant's own bodily needs, as well as from external frustrations of those needs. Klein argued that the infant first experiences the world during a paranoid–schizoid position, in

which the baby shifts between feeling loved, nurtured and cared for by the mother, felt to be the ideal world on the one hand, and feelings of persecution by the mother on the other hand felt to be life threatening (Segal, 2004). The external world is experienced as part objects; the infant splits both its ego and its object, and projects out separately its loving and hating feelings (life and death instincts) into separate parts of the mother (or breast). This is an indication of how the world is experienced as a series of persecutory anxieties, which the ego attempts to control by the splitting process (Klein, 1946).

Depressive position

Klein introduced the concept of the depressive position in 1934. According to Klein the infant experiences feelings of loss, a result of the pain related to the normal limitations of maternal handling (Likierman, 2002). This leads to anger in the first instance and ambivalent conflict between love and hate. This is explained by Klein's postulation of the hungry infant, who, in its unconscious phantasy, attacks the bad breast with rage and sadism through projection, and introjects the good breast to keep it safe and away from the bad object.

The projection of the bad object and sadistic attacks creates a hostile, externalised object, which is perceived as wanting to attack the infant. The infant initiates defenses to protect itself from depressive anxieties, a response to the concern about damaging and destroying all that is good in the world. This is phantasised, but felt to be real. It is an indication of the infant making mental repairs to a damaged, internal world.

The depressive position according to Klein (1935) occurs at around six months. The infant no longer splits objects, but begins to integrate experience; it realises the mother is a whole object and not made up of part objects. In her absence the infant can recall the gratification received from the mother, while the feelings of attack and annihilation as a result of the physical discomfort of hunger are no longer present and therefore the need for primitive defenses are diminished.

Klein's work expanded and clarified the concept of the inner world and its contents and relations as a means for understanding a person's development. What distinguishes Klein's theory from other theories is her notion of phantasy, where she describes the arena in which the paranoid-schizoid position and depressive position are played out. These ideas have been extended by Kleinians who have applied her concepts to analyse the relational dynamics within organisations and people's relationship with organisations.

5.4 Social defenses – Menzies Lyth

Isabel Menzies Lyth's theory originates from the object relations school of thought. She applied Klein's object relations theory to examine individuals' experience within the workplace. Menzies Lyth used this conceptual framework to understand nurses' behaviour and practices (1988). She draws on Klein's view that adults display primitive anxieties such as fear of annihilation, which produce primitive defenses, for example,

splitting, which are similar to anxieties and psychic defenses identified in infants.

Menzies Lyth's (1960) study found that primitive anxieties were aroused within nurses in response to intimate contact with patients. She explained how nurses project their own infantile phantasy on to their workplace, which result in them experiencing their work as a series of painful anxiety-filled occurrences. She postulated that individuals and the workplace itself develop defense mechanisms to help nurses deal with these disturbing experiences. Menzies Lyth defined these actions as 'social defenses', following Elliott Jacques (1955) ideas that the social structure and culture of organisations can be used unconsciously as defenses against anxiety.

Menzies Lyth describes the social defense systems as structured processes to evade anxiety; guilt; doubt; and uncertainty produced by the role of caring for patients, that is, people who are dependent, in pain and who need staff to take care of their needs. She found there was a high rate of staff turnover and students dropping out of their profession. As the study proceeded, she investigated the way in which nurses, both as individuals and as a group, responded to the high level of anxiety, and also examined how the hospital systems contained these unconscious anxieties. She found that the primary task of hospitals, to care for sick and vulnerable people, provoked anxiety. Her study showed that the anxiety experienced by nurses was a result of them constantly being confronted with the threat and reality of illness, suffering and death.

During the study, Menzies Lyth identified a number of social defenses applied by nursing staff to avoid the anxiety created by the nursing task. She found that the social defenses operated unconsciously and were embodied in the norms and practices of the organisation. Two examples of the social defense systems are outlined to provide a flavour of their features.

Depersonalisation, categorisation and denial of the significance of the individual

Here, the patient is not seen as a whole person needing care but as a number, an illness, or damaged part of the body, that is, 'a part-object only'.

Splitting up the nurse–patient relationship

In this instance, the total workload of a ward was broken down into lists of tasks, each of which was allocated to one nurse. The nurse performed set tasks for many patients, but had restricted contact with each individual.

The defenses were ineffective in containing nurses' anxieties because the underlying anxieties, that is, anxieties produced in relation to death, vulnerability and dependency, remained hidden and were not addressed. Perhaps the underlying anxiety stemmed from the feeling of fear related to, for example, feeling helpless in preventing patients from dying, which contradicts the primary task to care for patients. The initial fear of patients dying according to Tamara Bibby (2010) transcends into secondary anxieties related to

nurses having a sense of not knowing what they are meant to be doing, or not being good enough when patients die.

Menzies Lyth's (1960) study showed that, to understand how organisations work; how people manage working in institutions; how they complete difficult tasks; and how they work with vulnerable people in emotional conditions, it is important to investigate how the work itself is organised in a way which aims to defend the workers from task-related anxieties. Another area of interest is how people within organisations get along together, how they work together, and how they ensure the primary task is completed. Menzies Lyth's theory of social defenses has initiated a vast collection of approaches to examine organisational processes. Her work was influenced by Wilfred Bion because of her interest in the dynamics of group functioning.

5.5 Psychoanalytic group dynamics – Bion

Organisations are formed of groups in which individuals convene for one purpose: to solve problems and make decisions. A team's performance, effectiveness and success is dependent on how well individuals work together to achieve the group's goal.

The psychoanalyst Wilfred Bion (1961) made a major contribution to group relations by developing models of group work and new theories of group behaviour. Bion's theory is based on his work managing a rehabilitation unit for psychiatric patients in the British

Army during the Second World War. His experience of military leadership training and the rehabilitation of psychiatric patients convinced him of the importance of considering not only the individual in treatment but also the group, of which the individual is a member.

Bion theorised that in every group unconsciously two groups exist: the 'work group' and the 'basic assumption group', which are two configurations of mental activity (Lawrence et al., 1996). Bion's view was that groups operate on two levels: the work level (conscious), where there is concern for completing the task, and the unconscious level, where group members act as if they have made assumptions about the purpose of the group, which may be different from the conscious level.

Bion postulates that when a group comes together a collective mental activity takes place. This mental activity is referred to as 'group mentality', a term Bion used to describe what he believed to be 'the unanimous expression of the will of the group, an expression of will to which individuals contribute anonymously' (1961, p. 59). Bion's view was that the group mentality caused difficulties for the individual as it hindered the individual's pursuit of achieving his or her aim. In addition, in some ways it also acted as an organisationally situated example of the struggle between separation and merger. 'Separation' refers to the way in which individuals are allocated different roles and responsibilities within the same entity, with each member acting independently from

each other, whereas 'merger' relates to the way individuals bond together as a group to work cooperatively to complete the primary task.

When people come together as a group they have a shared aim and purpose to complete a primary task. When the group is in this mental state it is referred to as the work group. The work group requires all members to cooperate with each other, functioning at a level which enables them to overcome their frustrations and manage their emotions. At this level, individual members are able to own their own authority and recognise both interdependency and separateness as they subscribe consciously to work together.

Gordon Lawrence et al. (1996) asserts the work group members are in a mature productive mental state, in which they transform experience into insights and understanding.

The primary task of a group may generate anxiety, which, if not adequately contained (Bion, 1961), can lead to members of the group having to subdue, and attempt to eliminate from consciousness, the intense anxiety generated by the task (Donati, 2000). Bion asserts that alongside the work group the basic assumption group is sometimes at play. The basic assumption group arises from intense emotions of primitive origin. The goal of this group is to protect the unconscious needs of its members by reducing anxiety and internal conflicts (Stokes, 1994). When the groups functions, therefore, there are moments when its members operate unconsciously as each member enters into the unconscious aspect of group life. Within this mental state external reality is ignored

and collective unconscious dynamics rule. As this is unconscious, group members do not realise what is actually happening and become victims of the operational forces and the unconscious collective. This leads to ineffectiveness and self-contradictory behaviour (Minahan and Hutton, 2004) by group members.

Bion identifies three types of basic assumption groups: basic assumption dependency (BaD); basic assumption pairing (BaP); and basic assumption fight–flight (BaF). An overview of the basic assumption groups is provided below.

With BaD, the group seeks a leader who will relieve its members of all anxiety generated as a result of feelings of insecurity and vulnerability. This leader is thus invested with omnipotence, and with an expectation that he or she will protect members, solve all problems and ensure the sustainability of the group. Members surrender all responsibility and authority to the phantasised leader.

BaP is based on the collective and unconscious belief that current fears and anxiety of the group will be eradicated by the pairing or coupling of members to form a new leadership. Anton Obholzer (1987) states that when a group is in this phase its members are focused entirely on the future, which is a defense against the difficulties of the present.

With BaF, the assumption is that the group acts as if its main task is either to attack or avoid a common enemy who may be found either within or outside the group (Minahan and Hutton, 2004).

Later writers have suggested two additional basic assumptions: basic assumption oneness (BaO) and basic assumption me-ness (BaM). According to Pierre Turquet, BaO refers to 'when members seek to join in a powerful union with an omnipotent force, unobtainably high, to surrender self for passive participation, and thereby to feel existence, well-being, and wholeness' (Turquet, 1974, p. 357). It may be described as a commitment of the individual to the group; in turn, the group commits itself to a 'movement' – a cause outside itself as a way of survival. A fusion occurs in which unconsciously the individual feels that he or she is unable to survive if he or she does not follow the group's ideals. Turquet's description of BaO suggests that individuals seek a powerful leader and then cling together to follow this leader. It is important to understand that there can be a oneness with one unit against another, and here I am alluding to the idea of 'them' and 'us'. Therefore, in basic assumption oneness the group member 'becomes lost in oceanic feelings of unity' (Turquet, 1974, p. 360) as he or she surrenders all sense of individuality, responsibility and competence.

A fifth basic assumption is BaM. Gordon Lawrence et al. (1996) postulate that a culture of selfishness exists within the group in which individuals appear to be conscious only of their own personal boundaries, which they believe have to be protected from any form of

infiltration by others in the group. Lawrence et al. (1996) assert that this assumption arises from the 'group', that is, that the group is perceived as persecutory and thus the individual retreats into his or her internal world as though he or she is the only person who exists, and refuses to acknowledge other members of the group in order to protect the self. There are differences between BaM and the other basic assumption groups. For instance, Lawrence et al. postulates that when members are functioning in BaM mental state the group is invisible and unknowable, whereas in the other basic assumption mental states it is the individual who is invisible and unknowable.

I shall now apply a Kleinian psychodynamic approach to understand the unconscious life of organisations and how their functions are shaped by socially shared anxieties, unconscious phantasies and defenses.

5.6 Organisation-in-the-mind – Armstrong

Emotions in organisational life and their relationship to thinking can be very useful in helping us to explore the experience of individuals within their organisations. The notion of 'organisation-in-the-mind' provides us with a contemporary way of thinking about the experiences of individuals working in organisations, and also carries something of how the culture of the organisation generates emotional maps of the organisation. As a concept, 'organisation-in-the-mind' considers how the individual's internal picture is related to external events and the emotional responses and assumptions these events produce. This approach will therefore allow me to look at the subjective experience of the

participants within a particular context, researching beneath the surface of the 'personal' and 'public'.

Pierre Turquet in the 1960s introduced the term 'institution-in-the-mind'. Turquet (1974) uses the idea of institution-in-the-mind to demonstrate how individual members within organisations carry with them different perceptions, views and assumptions about the same organisation that may contradict one another. These thoughts are unconscious, but influence the behaviour and feelings of the individual. David Armstrong refined Turquet's notion of institution-in-the-mind and rephrased the term, calling it 'organisation-in-the-mind'. He defines organisation in the mind as:

what the individual perceives in his or her head of how activities and relations are organised, structured and connected internally. It is a model internal to oneself, part of one's inner world, relying upon the inner experiences of my interactions, relations and the activities I engage in, which give rise to images, emotions, values and responses in me, which may consequently be influencing my own management and leadership, positively or adversely (Armstrong, 2005, p. 4).

I apply this concept to interpret the organisation from the perspective of the individual, based on the view that a person's interaction with the external environment may be influenced by his or her inner psychic space and emotional experience of working in the organisation and carrying out tasks. This may affect the way in which people engage in,

and relate to, activities within the workplace, because the tasks they undertake and the relationships they are embedded in at the level of the organisation create images, emotions, values and responses in the person.

People enter prisons with their own unconscious phantasies about these organisations, based on a number of different personal and social characteristics, such as race, age, class, gender and sexuality, as well as personal history, culture, values, beliefs, etc. These social characteristics may become entwined with an individual's organisational identity, that is, that the individual completes a specific role in a system (organisation), and is involved in specific activities with boundaries. Thus the organisational space produces constellations of emotional experience and different mechanisms for dealing with these constellations. This is an indication of how the individual affects the organisation and how the organisation affects the individual, which may cause tension and anxiety. This view may help us to understand how an individual feels, thinks and responds when influenced by primitive anxieties and thus engages in primitive defenses to deal with the anxiety. I aim to use this approach to craft a description and analyse participants' organisation-in-the-mind, to discuss how unconscious and conscious socially inscribed processes and patterns of relating within the organisation are shown in participants' narratives. This insight will, it is hoped, show that anxieties stirred up by working in organisations are not unique to a particular individual, or, if they are unique, that they are produced out of an irreducible intersection of psychic and social processes.

As mentioned earlier, people enter organisations with their own social characteristics as well as their unique history, culture, and so forth, which influence their world view. An organisation comprises a variety of individuals with complex subjective perceptions of the organisation, which may be in conflict with each other. At the same time, tension may exist or be created between the individual's identity and the organisation's identity. This creates a series of conscious and unconscious monitoring of what the individual will allow him- or herself to perceive or accept, which is dependent on his or her survival and/or the organisation's need or ability to function. An organisation is also structured and shaped by particular sets of rules (both obvious and hidden), roles, tasks, hierarchies, values, pay grades, etc. that are sustained through the way in which tasks are assigned to different people and groups, or the way in which the primary task of the organisation is carried out. These all require individuals, teams and departments to work together. As such, a series of relational dynamics occur within the organisation as a result of the individuals who work in it, the primary task, and the organisation's identity.

Armstrong takes the fact that individuals are located in specific locations within organisations and applies the term 'punctuation of interpersonal space' (Armstrong, 2005, p. 52) to describe the location of individuals according to their role; the task they complete; seniority; and so on. The punctuation of interpersonal space creates a complex field of relationships within institutions. Furthermore, the behaviour of any individual, either within a group or the organisation at any given moment, is the expression of his or her own needs, history and behavioural patterns, and the needs, history and behavioural patterns of the group and the organisation.

In the following sections, I discuss how unconscious processes and well-developed defense mechanisms are initiated in response to the unconscious task and multiple tasks of prisons.

5.7 The unconscious task of prisons

Gordon Lawrence (1984) put forward the idea that organisations have a publicly stated primary purpose or mission and also a hidden conception at work. Obholzer and Roberts expand this view by stating:

There is the level of 'what we say we do' but there are also the levels of 'what we really believe we are doing' and also 'what is actually going on', the members of an organisation may be quite unconscious of this third level (1994, p. 121).

I translate Obholzer and Roberts' statement to mean that organisations comprise three levels: the mission statement; the work; and the reality.

The given or formally designated task of organisations is the normative primary task; the task a group thinks it is working on is the existential primary task; and the task that might be inferred from observations of the group at work is the phenomenal primary task (Lawrence, 1984); the latter primary task which Lawrence (1984) refers to being the

implicit aim of the organisation. I interpret this to mean what is actually happening within the organisation or what is experienced. This will differ from the organisation's intentions, because people bring with them a variety of responses to a given situation, derived from their own ways of seeing the world (Hutton et al., 1997) and a perspective developed on the grounds of accumulated individual and collective histories. Indeed, when people come together in organisations, individuals' primitive feelings and defenses may be mobilised on behalf of, and in service to, the institution and, thinking in line with Klein, bad feelings are often split off and projected on to outsiders. In addition, organisations may set things up to defend against anxiety. Armstrong (2005) quotes Edward Shapiro and Wesley Carr (1991) when he writes:

Any organisation is composed of the diverse fantasies and projections of its members. Everyone who is aware of an organisation, whether a member of it or not, has a mental image of how it works. Though these diverse ideas are not often consciously negotiated or agreed upon among the participants, they exist. In this sense, all institutions exist in the mind, and it is in interaction with these in-the-mind entities that we live (Shapiro and Carr, 1991. pp. 69–70, cited in Armstrong, 2005, p. 3).

Anton Obholzer's (1987) work describes the third level of organisations referring to hospitals. He posits that: 'the health service is unconsciously seen as a 'keep-death-at-bay-service'; whilst the stated task is the treatment of illness' (1987, p. 121). This is an interesting idea and may also be applied to prisons. Prisons are meant to punish, protect

and rehabilitate, as inferred in the mission statement, but unconsciously they may be perceived as a service to 'keep-criminality-at-bay' by 'dehumanise-brutalise-control'. This is what I define as the unconscious task of prisons, which may produce anxiety for the people who work in this environment, because these unconscious tasks are in conflict with the Prison Service Mission Statement.

In Chapter 1, Introduction, I explained and discussed at length the multiple tasks of prisons, and gave examples of how they may produce tension for the employees which leads to anxiety. Scholars such as Obholzer and Roberts (1994) use the term 'primary task'. When I refer to the British Prison Service I use the term 'multiple tasks' to incorporate the three objectives shown in the Prison Service Mission Statement.

Bearing the above ideas in mind, we can start to think about prisons in a different way; that is, that they are more than places where people are incarcerated and work. Rather, they exist as organisations-in-the-minds of employees, prisoners and the public, in different ways. For example, from a racial angle, black people have raised concerns that prisons are used as a means to oppress the black community. This is illustrated by the over-representation of black minority ethnic prisoners (The House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, 2007), as discussed in Chapter 2. This suggests that prisons also form part of political strategising, as shown in Michelle Alexander's book entitled *The New Jim Crow* (2011), where the author discusses mass incarceration within the US context. She postulates that prisons perpetuate a racial caste system that relegates black men in

particular to a state of permanent under-caste status and thus contributes to the social deterioration of African-American communities. The same could be said about the black community in the UK, with the over-representation of black people in British prisons. Ruth Chigwada-Bailey (2003) argues that the incarceration of black people is having a negative socio-economic effect on the black community in the UK. This view supports my earlier claim that prisons act as a means to control minority groups. It is also an example of how prisons may be unconsciously viewed as organisations that ‘dehumanise-brutalise-control’ prisoners.

5.8 The multiple tasks of prisons

In the above section, I explored the link between prison staff and the organisation in relation to the work they attempt to complete together. I also discussed the three levels that exist in an organisation in relation to what the organisation does, what the organisation says it does, and what the organisation is actually doing. I now want to put forward another idea about the dynamics that occur in prisons as a result of the Prison Service Mission Statement. The Mission Statement illustrates the multiple functions of prisons: to protect, punish and rehabilitate. The sequencing of the three roles of prisons illustrates a hierarchy of intention. Mike Fitzgerald and Joe Sim support this claim by stating that over the years the British Prison Service has become increasingly obsessed with protecting the public and have thus implemented ‘a system of intensive control, surveillance, and segregation of prisoners within those walls’, (1979, p. 27). They apply the term ‘paranoid escalation’ to illustrate the increased focus on maintaining security to

the detriment of the other tasks of prisons. There is another important element relating to the impact of an organisation premised on 'paranoid escalation' and punishment: it may have a negative impact on the staff who work there. That is that the organisational ethos and culture 'get inside' the people who work in prisons and produce patterns of reluctance and anxiety.

Another source of anxiety may be related to the different reasons why people choose to work in prisons and the various roles staff undertake. Craig Dowden and Claude Tellier (2004), referring specifically to correctional officers, assert that correctional officers enter their careers with either a rehabilitative or punitive orientation towards prisoners. This idea may be related to all prison staff. Thus, the different perspectives of the role of prisons, and the way in which prison staff carry out their duty in accordance with their job description, may be related to the multiple tasks of prisons, because an employee's duties will be in line with a particular aspect of the Mission Statement.

Ruby Millington (2001) provides an explanation for the reason why the Prison Service Mission Statement initiates staff anxiety, based on her reflection of working at Sharpshock, a Young Offender's Institution. She analysed her experience broadly within a Kleinian approach and asserts that the statement causes anxiety because it is broadly divided into three conflicting parts. For example, the first and second part of the mission statement describes the protection of the public and the punishing or punitive role of prisons, that is, the removal of liberty by imprisonment. The third part of the statement

refers to the rehabilitation of offenders. The multiple tasks outlined in the mission statement suggest that all tasks occur equally and are completed by all staff, but this is not the case. It is from this point of view I relate the multiple tasks of prisons to Gordon Lawrence's (1984) conception of the three tasks organisations perform: the normative primary task; the existential primary task; and the phenomenal primary task. I am suggesting that the Prison Service Mission Statement outlines the normative primary task, while the existential primary task that non-operational staff are led to believe they are undertaking is to rehabilitate offenders, because this group tend to deliver specialist services around rehabilitation and health, although a small number of prison officers also undertake rehabilitation work. However, rehabilitation tasks tend to be restricted by the prison regime in favour of the phenomenal primary task, the sole function of which is to uphold security in respect of maintaining well-ordered prisons. This is the main duty of operational staff and highlights why this group make up the largest staff group by far, specifically that of prison officers. Therefore, security is paramount to the everyday functioning of prisons. The emphasis on security may give the impression that the members of staff who fulfil this role have a more important role than other staff who complete other tasks in prisons, and may explain why operational and non-operational staff may experience tension and role conflict.

To conclude, the aim of this chapter was to discuss the complex dynamics that exist within organisations at the individual, group, and organisational levels, and apply these ideas as a means to examine the complex institutional relational fields, with all the different hierarchies that produce anxiety that then needs to be defended against by the

organisation, the groups, and the individual. By applying different theoretical frameworks I was able to begin to think about the way in which I might examine how prisons are punctuated by different roles and duties; operational and non-operational staff status that are underpinned by gender and racial difference; together with the multiple tasks of prisons and the way in which they create a very complex field of relationships. Moreover, I have put forward my rationale for applying different theories with what may seem to be very different angles and diverse analytical approaches, because, as I see it, the internal and external reality of the individual, as well as his or her gendered racialisation, is fundamental in order to provide an insight into the psychosocial experience of black women Prison Service employees.

In previous chapters I have presented the background of the different people who work in the British Prison Service. I have also discussed how gender and race are entwined in every aspect of the organisation. In addition, I have presented different perspectives on how to view the organisational psychodynamics that has an impact on three levels: the individual, group, and organisation. The theoretical perspectives presented in this chapter are a combination of viewpoints that I find not only very fruitful but necessary to answer the research questions.

I have set the scene for my analysis of the data in the chapters which follow. In Chapter 6 I examine the interaction between the structural features of the organisation and its

members, which stimulates patterns of individual and group dynamic processes resulting in the organisation's culture (Miller, 1993).

6. The Culture of Prisons: Mistrust, Suspicion and Violence

My gaze is everywhere

It is upon you.

Deciphering your unspoken words,

Interpreting your glare.

Marcia Thomas

Understanding how prisons function requires a detailed analysis of the diversity of underlying practices and procedures that are present in most British prisons. Exploring the culture of prisons is important because it has a direct bearing on the behaviour of the people within prisons: both staff and prisoners. Indeed, the way the culture develops may have a positive or negative impact on the life of people who inhabit this space.

Understanding the impact of organisational culture on the way in which relational dynamics among employees are created and affected by racial and gender difference may be instrumental in providing an insight into the experiences of employees from gender and racial minority groups.

The literature discussed in this chapter is based on operational prison staff as opposed to non-operational staff, because the majority of prison staff literature is written from a

prison officer perspective. However, the participants' accounts that I discuss are from a combination of operational and non-operational staff.

6.1 Aspects of prison culture

It is important to note that a large proportion of the prison culture literature originates from the US. Nevertheless, there are similarities between US and UK prisons, as well as similarities between prison officers and correctional officers' experiences of working in prisons.

There are different levels of cultural attributes within organisations, some of which are readily observable and others that are less tangible. There may be incongruence between outwardly professed values of prisons and how the culture develops in reality. In the following sections I endeavour to examine cultural attributes at one level: underlying assumptions that make up the unspoken rules of the organisation about 'why things are done and the way they are done'. I focus specifically on mistrust, suspicion and violence, as these elements are not espoused beliefs and values that can be found in written policies and documents. In keeping with my theoretical approach, combining aspects of intersectionality with psychodynamics of organisations, I differentiate two aspects of the informal 'unwritten' by stating that there are (a) informal but accepted norms and practices or customs of interaction and task achievement, and (b) more unconscious aspects underlying patterns of interaction that take place.

6.2 Prison officer culture

People are central to the cultures formed in prisons, but cultures endure beyond individuals, who come and go. They are perpetuated through symbols, stories, rituals and language that link the organisation with its history and send a message about what is important. Academic research on prisons has stated that officer culture emanates from the social structure of the prison rather than individual officers (Sykes, 1958) and that it is a result of the environment of the prison, not the people who become officers (Crawley, 2004a; Kauffman, 1988; Zimmer, 1986; Crouch and Marquart, 1980). This suggests that prison officers are socialised into the culture of the organisation and that it may be difficult for them to step back and assess it objectively, or break out of it. In this regard, a strong organisational culture controls organisational behaviour (Shafritz and Ott, 1992), which leads to a shared culture of practice and values among prison officers.

Kelsey Kauffman (1988) completed an ethnographic study at a maximum security institution in the US. She examined the dominant values and beliefs of correctional officer culture and analysed the attitudes of correctional officer recruits. She found that correctional officers developed shared attitudes and behaviours over time after constantly being exposed to the environment of the prison.

Kauffman identified nine prison officer norms she felt constituted the officer subculture:

- Always go to the aid of an officer in distress.
- Don't 'lug' (smuggle) drugs.
- Don't 'rat' (inform on another officer).
- Never make a fellow officer look bad in front of prisoners.
- Always support an officer in a dispute with a prisoner.
- Always support officer sanctions against prisoners.
- Don't be a 'white hat' ('goody-two-shoes').
- Maintain officer solidarity versus all outside groups.
- Show positive concern for fellow officers.

She also found that correctional officers held an entrenched cynicism about, and mistrust of, prisoners and colleagues outside the correctional officer group, which included management and administration staff.

6.3 Suspicion and mistrust among prison officers.

The nine prison officer norms lead to the formation of a symbolic boundary around the correctional officers that result in an insider/outsider divide. For the purpose of this section, I will focus on one of Kauffman's norms, to maintain officer solidarity versus all

outside groups, and relate this norm to the issue of mistrust. I aim to build on this particular theme by focusing in particular on Roy Lewicki et al.'s (1998) work, to consider the relationship between employees' perceptions of the treatment of new staff and racial difference in the organisation, and their self-categorised feelings of mistrust and isolation within the prison context.

Lewicki et al. (1998) claim that organisational relationships are based on both trust and mistrust. Scholars such as Phillip Shaver and Cindy Hazan (1994) have argued that trust is an essential ingredient for a healthy organisation, and the basis for stability in social institutions (Zucker, 1986). In addition, John Rempel et al. (1985) assert that trust is necessary for the foundation of interpersonal relationships. Within the prison context, trust among prison officers is very important (Kauffman, 1988) and is necessary for a bond to develop between individuals, as prison officers are outnumbered by prisoners. It is therefore essential for prison officers to know that instant help is available from colleagues when required (Liebling and Price, 2001). Roderick Kramer and Roy Lewicki's (2010) definition of trust can be used to explain the importance of trust among prison officers. They apply the term 'presumptive trust', referred to as positive social expectations that increase an individual's willingness to trust members of an organisation. Trust can be defined as one party's optimistic expectation of the behaviour of another, when the former has to make a decision about how to act under conditions of vulnerability and dependence (Hosmer, 1995). In reciprocal terms, mistrust refers to the expectation that others will not act in one's best interest, even engaging in potentially

injurious behaviour (Govier, 1994) and the expectation that capable and responsible behaviour from specific individuals will not be forthcoming (Barber, 1983).

Presumptive trust, according to Kramer and Lewicki (2010), may be based on identity, roles, rules or leadership actions. It is their contention that identification plays a significant role in the formation of trust amongst individuals, by claiming that identification with others who share a common category membership, that is, homophily, increases the positive social expectations that underpin trust. In the context of British prisons, I am using the term homophily to refer to an observable tendency and opportunity to form an immediate bond within a specific group. From a racial perspective I put forward the idea that the majority of prison officers are white, and that white prison officers will identify and bond with other white prison officers. Likewise, from a gender angle, the majority of prison officers are men and therefore male prison officers will identify and bond with other male prison officers. These definitions imply that trust is established when people perceive a shared background or identity and interact well with each other. Therefore, once trust is established, people are willing to assume assistance and group support, and cohesion is formed.

I will expand the idea of trust in organisations to explore the deeper meaning and behavioural dynamics of organisational trust by applying an organisational psychodynamic paradigm and the above trust concepts to explore the interpersonal relationships within prisons. Focusing specifically on boundaries, roles and role

configurations, structure, work culture and group processes, I will examine how they can become deeply meaningful and emotionally charged. In terms of trust, I will look at how mistrust may increase, which may indicate the prevalence of phantasmised fear of annihilation. Specifically, it is my intention to take the idea of trust/mistrust and link it to the effects of socially inscribed difference around race and gender to show how a culture of mistrust and suspicion is traceable in prisons.

Alongside trust/mistrust I will be looking at suspicion to emphasise prison officer culture. Here I am using the term 'suspicion' in a very specific manner. The term is taken from the notion of 'suspect community', initially developed by Paddy Hillyard (1993) and expanded by Mary Hickman et al., (2011) to investigate Muslim and Irish people being treated as 'suspect' and the impact this has on their everyday lives. I relate this phenomenon to the way individuals within the prison context may assume a person may do something wrong, based on little evidence or without proof. This may lead to individuals who lack trust viewing their environment through a hypervigilant lens that may evolve into paranoia.

I also link the idea of mistrust and suspicion to racialised and gendered difference within prisons. I suggest that identification along racial lines establishes boundaries and bonding between groups of staff. For example, prison staff groups are dominated by white male staff. Black female employees may therefore be viewed with suspicion, which may lead to a lack of trust by their white male/female colleagues as a result of racial prejudice.

This may occur in response to white staff's lack of interaction with black people as colleagues. For example, they may never have been in a situation in which they have had the same occupational status. Therefore, when black women take on the role as prison employees they also take on a role that is perceived by their colleagues as incongruent for someone of their race and gender. This creates a 'them/us' scenario, in which white male/female prison officers as a racial group form an allegiance with each other based on race that overshadows their group identity as prison officers. This sets the foundation for suspicion, with the resulting negative and/or uncomfortable intergroup encounters among individuals of diverse racial and gender backgrounds that may produce anxiety for the individual and the organisation as a whole. This provides an illustration of psychodynamic ideas about responding to difference.

Examining the concept of trust within prisons is an interesting angle to use to understand psychosocial experiences within this environment. In the following sections I will discuss what Sandra Robinson et al. (2004) refer to as 'cycles of trust'. I use this term to show how new prison officers are presented with conditions of low trust and are initially perceived as outsiders; this may then create an expectation that they will be treated as outsiders and not automatically accepted into the group. The concept is also applied to show how suspicion can lead to presumptive mistrust, which in turn damages relationships in ways that are resistant to repair. Finally I endeavour to show how mistrust can exacerbate the risk and threat of violence within prisons. Prisons may be deemed as hostile environments and therefore the organisational culture may be laced with mistrust, suspicion and violence. This creates a 'them and us' attitude that is

developed between staff and prisoners as well as existing staff and new recruits, or staff who do not fit the axiomatic prison officer image of 'white male'. This may lead to staff becoming suspicious of the intention and behaviour of colleagues as well as prisoners.

I also apply the idea of suspicion and mistrust to the prison context by suggesting that the multiple aims of the prison derived from the Prison Service Mission Statement may inadvertently create and perpetuate a culture of suspicion, mistrust and violence. I am referring here to the multiple tasks of prison which is to punish offenders through incapacitation; protect by providing a place for secure confinement of offenders; and rehabilitate offenders. It is generally quite impossible to ascertain whether prisons carry out all three avowed objectives consistently and the impact this may have on the people who work there.

The complexity of the multiple aims of the Prison Service and the impact this has on the organisation's culture needs to be seen as a dynamic organisational phenomenon, manifesting in unique ways according to racial and gender difference. It can be further implied that the organisational culture may in fact both unwittingly and wittingly foster the creation of social defenses to avoid anxiety. This defense may manifest in subtle forms such as suspicion, mistrust and also through incidents of unlawful and sanctioned forms of violence to protect prison staff from the anxiety produced.

6.4 Suspicion and relational dynamics

I will refer to the data to show how Trina, a 40-year-old mixed-race prison officer working at HMP Mali, describes her experience when she first started working at the prison. Trina has spent her whole prison career at HMP Mali. A brief overview of new prison officers will be useful at this point to set the scene of Trina's entry into, and career in, the service. During the first 12 months, prison officers are referred to as POELTs, and during this period they undertake on-the-job training in a prison. They are at the same grade as existing prison officers, and their equal position may cause tension between existing prison officers and new recruits because experienced prison officers have no authority to instruct new recruits to do specific tasks, yet as part of their 'informal induction' there is an expectation that POELTs will follow the actions of existing prison officers without question. Therefore, if a new recruit attempts to do a task in a different way to the norm, this may lead to conflict. Apprehension is created because there is uncertainty as to whether new recruits can be relied upon, or can be trusted to follow the behaviour of existing prison officers. This leads to anxiety because prison officers as a group rely on each other to maintain control and security.

The extract below provides an example of how suspicion may lead to new recruits feeling isolated and vulnerable.

urm, well when I first started, that weren't very nice because people don't really talk to me [Trina giggles] so don't really have many people to talk to. Urm you

have a lot of stab backing, [Trina tuts] stab back, people stabbing you in the back, urm but I think that's just a general really, I don't think that's because I'm female, I'm black, I think that's just, I didn't feel it was that way anyway. I do feel that sometimes it takes that little bit; bit longer to settle in somewhere and a prison is one of them places where that takes a lot more to settle in. Urm, (1) I don't think anything of it really (1) no more than any other job. Urm, (1) but now I mean I'm very settled in urm (1) get on with most people, I'd say anyway in general. (3) Now that I've stuck it out. [We both laugh] Urm I enjoy the job.

Trina's extract is very complicated and is worth dissecting to get a sense of how the organisational culture of mistrust and suspicion permeates the inter-relationship amongst staff. At the start of her extract, Trina describes an imposed isolation from the moment she started working at HMP Mali and relates this to her colleagues not talking to her. She then proceeds to give a picture of the organisational culture depicted by the statement: 'Urm you have a lot of stab backing, [Trina tuts] stab back, people stabbing you in the back.' This statement might suggest that not only are 'you' being stabbed in the back, but also 'I' stab back in the sense of retaliating. There is an element of ambiguity of who is actually doing the stabbing in the sense of trust and mutual support, thereby suggesting that a culture of mistrust and suspicion abounds. This highlights the harshness of the organisation. In addition, the statement metaphorically implies that 'you' give and give back, or 'you' get and 'you' get back. In this context, suspicion and mistrust might act as a social defense in the sense of being forearmed and 'ready' for any attack. It is a way of defending against the anxiety produced by the fear of violence. However, it is ineffective

in containing the anxiety and thus is a clear indication of how mistrust may negatively affect the relationship between colleagues.

I draw on Freud's theory of slips of the tongue, which may tell us something about Trina's unconscious processing. Freud deemed slips of the tongue as revealing an unconscious thought, belief, wish or motive occurring in everyday life (Freud, 1901). According to Freud, when a slip of the tongue occurs it is an indication that the individual unconsciously does not want to put into words a disturbing thought. However, once the slip of the tongue has happened, this forces the thought back into words, which is probably against the person's will. This in turn alters the expression of the intention, which is what Freud refers to as the mechanism of a slip of the tongue (Freud, 1901). Here I apply the concept to examine Trina's emphasis on 'stabbing'. Having already described the culture of prisons as being permeated with suspicion and mistrust, I examine this phrase within the conditions of this incident. The phrase 'stabbing' gives us a hint of Trina's suspicion directed towards her colleagues, which provides an indication of the inner tension in relation to the way in which individuals form allegiances or exclude others within the prison context.

Trina's frequent pauses after her slip of the tongue and the tone of her voice denotes a sense of uncertainty; perhaps with regard to whether she should disclose this information. Furthermore, her recollection may have generated negative feelings that were too painful to verbalise, or were perhaps an indication of her struggling to convey what she wanted to

say. An explanation for this may be related to subtle forms of racial inequalities in prisons (Edgar and Martin, 2004). Subtle forms of racial inequalities may prompt black women to think about, and often guess, whether or not their white male/female colleagues are secretly prejudiced. This may lead to black women prison employees wondering whether their white co-workers secretly hold them in contempt because of their gendered racialisation. Likewise, white prison employees may have similar unspoken thoughts about their black female counterparts. An insidious incident may trigger suspicion and set off a dismal spiral of mistrust, reaction and irreparable relationships.

The tangling of words might also signify Trina attempting to make sense of her experience at HMP Mali. This can be seen in her evaluation of her initial enforced isolation. Trina states that the rejection of new recruits may not necessarily be about gender or race, but may occur in any workplace. This is shown by this comment: 'urm but I think that's just a general really, I don't think that's because I'm female, I'm black, I think that's just, I didn't feel it was that way anyway.' Trina goes on to state that prisons are places where it takes a long period of time for new staff to settle in. What is particularly interesting is the way in which she uses violence as a metaphor, 'stabbing' to illustrate this point. This provides an insight into the culture of prisons, which is formed around acts of violence. The actuality or possibility of being physically harmed at any time during a prison officer's shift is a reality because of violent and non-violent prisoners who inhabit this space. Trina gives an example of how dangerous prisons can be in her comment below:

I've not, I've not really had much problems with prisoners really. I've had occasional, couple of them spat in my face, but [Trina smirks]

I remark:

That's part of being an officer really.

Talking about violence during this interview aroused anxiety and feelings of helplessness in me that resulted in my comment above. Listening to Trina describe being spat at on two occasions resonated with, and mirrored situations from, my own work experience. The feelings re-experienced were intense, possibly overwhelming, and difficult to contain, which explains why I made the above remark. This is an illustration of the way my feelings were imported into the interview through a process of identification.

My comment reaffirms the realisation that prison staff may encounter unwanted behaviour from prisoners. It also highlights my understanding of Trina's experience from her point of view. Here I refer to the acknowledgement of violence in prisons and the difficulty of speaking about the violent aspect of prison life. This is emphasised by our reaction to my remark and Trina's next comment.

[we both laugh] and that's about it (1). I've not had any assaults at all, you know [MT 'Yeah'] I've been spat at [Trina laughs] yeah.

There is a moment of quiet, maybe a realisation of the broken silence, compounded by the organisational culture, that it is better not to discuss violence against staff in prisons, and also that violence in this environment is tolerated. Little is known about the impact of the threat of, or actual, violence on prison staff, but the above encounter shows how it forms part of the organisational structure. Trina's last comment is segmented: she refers to spitting as though it is less significant than physical assaults. This is a social defense, the splitting of a violent act, when in fact spitting and physical assault are both violent acts.

Numerous authors have pointed out that prisons are threatening and dangerous places (for instance, Fleisher 1989; Jacobs, 1977; Toch, 1977) as a result of the type of people who are incarcerated, and the reality that prisoners and staff may be attacked without warning. Indeed, Gresham Sykes (1958) originally identified fear as one of the 'pains of imprisonment'. This point indicates that violence is a structured part of the organisational culture of prisons and impacts on all those within them, albeit in different ways.

To develop the discussion point about suspicion and violence further, I relate these ideas to the make-up of prisons being white and masculine spaces. Prisons in the UK may be seen as organisations in which white masculine culture dominates the social structure and functions as a system of control and privilege. I further assert that white masculinity leads to a position of privilege within prisons. In this context, white masculinity refers to the

dominance of white men as prison employees, and they are the main focus in prison occupation literature. It might be further argued that black women who work in white male-dominated organisations have to observe the norms of the organisation and work to 'fit in' to succeed in the process of conforming. They not only have to negotiate working in masculine organisations, but also have to adapt to white superiority. Therefore, it is important to understand what it means for black women to work in organisations that are constituted by white male domination.

Nirmal Puwar (2004) has shown what can happen when women and/or racialised minorities take up privileged positions in organisations. Their presence disturbs and disrupts the status quo as they enter spaces that historically have been reserved for white men. This may explain the tension produced by black women and the relational dynamics occurring as a result of their professional presence that disrupts the spatial order of white masculine superiority.

There is a misconception that prisons are race-neutral spaces on account of the attempts made by the Prison Service to implement positive race relations and increase the number of black staff. However, I put forward the view that prisons are racialised spaces because race mediates the relational dynamics between staff and staff, and staff and prisoner. The particular case I use to show how prisons are racialised, and also how this space of white masculine culture is disrupted by black women's presence as professionals, is taken from

a scenario involving Raisa, a British Asian female teacher who worked at HMP Sahelian. Here Raisa describes the quality and skills she brought to her establishment.

Well the quality and skills that I brought to the service was I think the quality of being non-white, from being from a different, different culture, because what I found initially, the prison staff they (1) they were urm [Raisa tuts] their inadequacies, their limited knowledge of different ethnicities, different religions, cultures, language, food, you know and I thought that was something I brought with me, because as part of, not just working in the education department I also worked with the race relations liaison officer as well. I mean she was a race relations liaison officer, but she had no idea, you know, she had no idea of people's religious backgrounds, their cultures they have, the prison itself didn't facilitate people of different races urm, their cultures, their religion there was nothing there. And I actually helped with this urm liaison officer, I actually helped build some of the ethnic communities such as the Muslim communities, urm getting them prayer mats, you know little simple things, like that. Copies of the Quran in English, this officer wasn't aware that you could buy copies of the Quran in English and in fact the prison didn't spend any money because I got them donated from the very communities, you know. Urm so those are the qualities I thought, you know, I did bring and if anything else, urm I felt I was a resource, you know so if I'm a resource, then use me, ask me, but they're very reluctant to do that because it's like if they stay ignorant, therefore, they don't have to do anything about it. (1)

From Raisa's extract you get an insight into race, or in this case ethno-religious difference. According to Nabil Khattab (2009), ethno-religious difference may be used to explain 'the degree of ethnic penalty that various minorities are likely to face' as a result of two interrelated factors: the visibility of the group (measured by skin colour), and the cultural proximity to the hegemonic culture (measured by religious background). Thus, ethno-religious difference is deeply embedded in prisons, and those who are appointed to improve race relations lack awareness of racial, cultural, ethnic and religious difference, and have limited insight into provisions available to facilitate religious observance. It is important for me to explain how I link racial difference to ethno-religious difference. In this context I show how a group of people is reduced to one aspect of its identity in terms of signifiers of race, ethnicity, religion or culture, thus, 'essentialising people on the basis of their outward appearance – whether it be skin colour, facial features, a headscarf, beard, an accent' (Veiszadeh, 2015, citing Abdel-Fattah, 2014). This is a process of racialisation.

Raisa deemed her racial and ethnic background to be an asset to the organisation. Other scholars, such as Gail Lewis (2000), when interviewing black women working in social work professions, found a similar attitude in their participants towards their work and the qualities they felt they brought to their role. In Raisa's account she appeared to be eager to utilise her skills when working with prisoners from different ethnic groups. Her attitude to her work and keenness to improve race relations may be viewed in the task of establishing positive staff-prisoner relationships. This is an approach that has been

highlighted as being paramount for decent, safe prisons to function. Bethany Schmidt asserts:

these [staff-prisoner] relationships are complex, often predicated upon surprising levels of mutual discretion, trust, and dependence. It is from getting these relations right that decency and balanced levels of care and custody are established (2013, pp. 12–17).

Staff–prisoner relationships can be made more difficult when language becomes a barrier to effective communication. English Second Language (ESL) prisoners may struggle to communicate what they want, or struggle to receive information regarding their entitlement in prisons. This may generate negative emotional and cognitive responses, and prevent ESL prisoners from seeking information and receiving their entitlements, such as meals.

Raisa's extract above illustrates how she was able to draw on her own experience as a British Asian woman to empathise with ESL prisoners. Prison employees from different ethnic groups may be able to identify these barriers more easily than their white British counterparts. Therefore, the role of ethnicity, understood as a cultural phenomenon referring to a person's identification with a particular cultural group (Hinman, 2014), may be used as a resource upon which staff from different ethnic groups may draw to respond to prisoners' needs. Unfortunately, however, this may create complex and problematic trust relations between groups of staff within prisons as a result of racial inequality.

To expand this argument further, I relate the notion of suspicion and mistrust to structural racialisation, which is entwined in the organisation's culture. I mentioned earlier how racial differentiation is constantly being re-created to serve a social purpose. This is maintained through practices and procedures and is reinforced by belief systems such as the notion of white superiority and/or associating 'Muslim' with terrorist (Hickman et al., 2011). This notion occurs implicitly and is difficult to detect. It is illustrated in Raisa's extract above when she refers to the lack of provisions for Muslim prisoners, and is an indication of the way this group was treated differently from, and considered inferior to, the dominant group. Moreover, the lack of provision and reluctance of managers to increase their knowledge of different cultural and religious groups perpetuates the alienation of this group from the broader prison community while simultaneously embedding racist myths and stereotypes about it.

Another example of the way different ethnic groups are treated differently at HMP Sahelian is shown in Raisa's excerpt below:

So it was quite a positive start to it urm and then I started. It wasn't until I started the job and then I could see how (1) not me, but I could see the difference how prisoners were being treated. If you were black, you were treated differently. If you were Asian you were treated differently. If you were white you were treated differently. And when I mean differently, differently is, staff would say, 'Oh these people, or those people' [Raisa emphasises the word 'these' and 'those'] it was

the language. And I sort of, used to think, you know, I felt that it was discriminatory language. So that's where it sort of triggered from (4) yeah, I think that, that sort of what made me think about it first um that's where the sort of negative bits started falling into place. Before I went into the prisons I didn't realise it was like that.

Raisa explains how she quickly began to notice how dissimilar ethnic groups were treated differently. She makes reference to a 'them and us' culture, which I have interpreted as relating to race in favour of the dominant group – white, and also in this situation ethno-religious difference. Raisa provides an example of the terms used by her colleagues when she mentions 'oh these people, or those people'. She emphasises these words, which illustrates the rhetoric and animosity towards minority ethnic groups.

I apply the concept of racialisation in this context to refer to 'the process by which racial understandings are formed, reformed and assigned to groups of people and to social institutions and practices' (Small, 1994, p. 30).

I examine another extract from Raisa's narrative. The account below describes a scenario between Raisa, her managers, and an elderly male Asian student. To put the discussion into context, studies have indicated that there is a fundamental problem of trust in general between white prison staff and black staff and prisoners, specifically towards those of Asian descent. For example, the HMIP (2010) found in their thematic review that Muslim prisoners reported more negatively on their prison experience, particularly with regard to

their safety and their relationship with staff, than other prisoners. The Home Office's Citizenship Survey (2004) similarly reported greater racial prejudice among the general population towards those of Asian origin than other ethnic groups. It is also worth noting that a large proportion of Muslim prisoners are of Asian descent. This suspicion can extend to staff of Asian heritage.

In the following extract, Raisa continues to describe her experience when working at HMP Sahelian, and explains that her white colleagues and managers were inquisitive when she spoke to an ESL prisoner in another language. This is an indication of mistrust.

And what did I learn from that? Well in, in my whole years of being at school, going to university, working, this was the first time, I urm that I was actually faced with urm, urm racism and I didn't know it was racism. Urm I really, really didn't know it was racism at all. Urm the staff would become very urm (2) what's the word I'm looking for (5)? They would become very suspicious if an elderly prisoner spoke to me in an Asian language and the reason he would speak to me in that language is because he couldn't speak English and it would be simply like, where do I need to go? You know, who do I need to speak to? Can you do this for me because I didn't get my meal last night? And the very managers, and staff and officers would come very suspicious of why this urm prisoner was not speaking English and urm very often I would be called, almost ordered to the manager's office and asked, 'Why are you talking in a different language,?' you know urm.

(1)

The incident involving Raisa using her bilingual skills to communicate with an Asian prisoner highlights the importance of certain social characteristics such as gender, race, ethnicity, culture and country of origin when forming trust relationships between staff and prisoners. It also illustrates the complexity of interpersonal communication (Knapp and Vangelisti, 2000) between prisoners and staff, shown by the prisoner's action in identifying Raisa as a person he could communicate with and who could help him get information.

The account also illustrates the prisoner's rapport with Raisa, which may have been a result of him recognising her as someone who shared a similar ethnicity and culture. The notion of culture in this context is used to show how shared meaning, language and perceptions create a shared understanding between individuals. Taken together, these factors shape the way people interact and relate to each other.

Raisa's account refers to the way her colleagues reacted towards her as a result of her speaking in a foreign language to an ESL prisoner. Her action had a negative impact on inter-staff relations. The negative reaction of Raisa's white colleagues demonstrates how race and ethnicity may act as structuring social hierarchies. Here I am suggesting that Raisa's response to the prisoner, that is, to communicate in a different language, created hostility and intensified the mistrust between her and her white colleagues, thus further highlighting her racial and ethnic difference.

I relate this view to organisational culture in which the prison world is characterised by solidarity between prison staff, enforced through the prison officer code, which operates above any other identity position (that is, ethnicity, age, sexuality, and so on), because prison officer's identity assumes the greatest significance (Liebling et al, 2011b; Liebling and Price, 2001; Kauffman, 1988). This creates inequality in prisons. I link this view specifically to my suggestion earlier that prisons perpetuate a white masculine culture exemplified by the axiomatic white male prison officer's attitude and practice that controls the processes and practices within prisons. For example, only English is spoken by staff to prisoners. Therefore, Raisa's action was disruptive to the established process.

This perspective might explain why Raisa's managers felt it was their right to be heard in terms of stereotyped traits, by implying through their actions that there was something sinister in Raisa speaking another language to an ESL prisoner and chastising her. Their response may have been fuelled by the characteristics of the axiomatic white male prison officer, resulting in the majority of staff not being able to identify with people from other cultural groups. This illustrates the process of identification in relation to white male prison officers that I referred to earlier. This creates a 'privileged' position and status that leads to white staff differentiating themselves from those who are 'not members of that group'. It is also linked to the general 'suspicion' with which Asian people are greeted. I made reference to this claim that was put forward by Mary Hickman et al. (2011) earlier.

This may also lead to negative attitudes towards such groups (Bartel, 2001) and create irreplaceable trust relationships between different racial groups.

What is interesting about Raisa's account is that it gives an insight into the organisational culture whereby difference is not allowed. That is, Raisa provides a wonderful testimony, showing how staff who do not resemble the iconic image of prison officer are automatically faced with suspicion. Furthermore, her comment suggests yet another important consideration in defining prison culture and its pressure to eliminate racial difference within the staff group. Raisa's portrayal of the incident in terms of institutional racism provides an indication of how racism does not occur in a social vacuum, nor is it 'over' after the incident; it is a process rather than an event. This is shown by her analysis of the whole situation and how she relates it to racism, while implying that before she worked in the prison she was not able to recognise racism. However, the organisation opened up a new lens that made her recognise racism in organisational life.

From an organisational psychodynamic perspective, Raisa's account illustrates the emotional currents that in part give shape to the interactions among and between staff and prisoners in the context of ethnic diversity and prison culture. The incident demonstrates the ways in which people from different racial backgrounds work in an organisation in which racial dynamics may erupt and can become more salient than other dynamics (McRae and Short, 2010). In this context, unconscious phantasies are laden with racial

manifestations that strongly affect the relational dynamics within the prison, producing tension and anxiety.

This leads me to interpret this incident in terms of it having cultural meanings; in other words, as a socially situated, dynamic process involving context, individuals and structure. I have constructed a conceptual definition that takes into account the historical and social context and relationships between the individuals concerned. This has shown how suspicion and mistrust towards difference in this context is a natural extension of racism that usually allocates privilege along racial lines. Likewise, privilege may occur along gender lines. This theme will be explored in the next section.

6.5 Masculinity

In the literature review I put forward the view that prisons are gendered in the sense of being formed in the image of a normative masculinity that is coded as white and heterosexual. Indeed, workplace norms and relations are marked by gender inequality. This might be a result of an organisational culture that is constructed by, and composed of, unwritten codes in the patriarchy and power relations of hegemonic masculinity (Newton, 1994). Don Sabo et al. (2001) assert that prisons are gendered spaces that reflect and reproduce social relations of men and women in the outside world. Prisons are not completely cut off from the outside world because cultures within prisons are influenced by broader societal attitudes, including public opinion, media narratives and dominant beliefs in the wider institutional framework in which the deprivation of liberty

takes place. From a prisoner standpoint, Joe Sim (2006), writing from a UK perspective, claims the daily experiences of male prisoners are mediated by their relationships with, and expectations of, other prisoners and their guards as men. For Sim a culture of masculinity permeates prisons, often generating a hostile environment. This view is further supported by Nicholas de Viggiani's (2003) UK-based prison ethnography that stated that masculine ideology dominates prison culture. Elizabeth Comack (2008) contends that custodial institutions encourage male prisoners to engage in masculine behaviour whenever possible. Here, Comack is referring to the position of men in a gender order (Connell, 1995), in which patterns of practice take place; for example, the expectation that men will participate in violent acts against others. There is no doubt that prisons are harsh places in which to live and work. Richard Tewksbury and Sue Collins (2006) stipulate that men are more likely than women to act in an aggressive manner towards others, thus demonstrating the increased likelihood of men being violent in situations lacking provocation. Serious incidents in prisons may involve violence and risk to life. Acts and threats of violence are often utilised in attempts to maintain and control the social structure. Acts of violence may be deemed to be a symbolic representation of competing masculinities, that is, 'hardness and softness are not fixed attributes inscribed onto maleness, but notions that circulate in prison and vary with circumstances' (Bandyopadhyay, 2006, p. 191). This demonstrates the complexity of the prison environment and the pressure placed on prisoners and staff and their construction of self in the institution.

So far I have referred to violence from the perspective of prisoners. However, violence and aggression by prison officers has been documented as a prevalent part of prison officer culture (Tewksbury and Collins, 2006). This may be related to dominant forms and codes of masculinity that serve to legitimise violence, both toward others and the self, as a means of controlling others and dealing with emotional pain. It is not my intention here to go into more detail about prison officers' sanctioned use of violence, referred to as Control & Restraint C&R), but rather state at this point that C&R is often used as a means for controlling prisoners' behaviour, especially prisoners who differ from staff demographically (Marquart, 1986, cited by Tewksbury and Collins, 2006). C&R will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

It appears that a culture of violence develops as part of the social structure of prisons (West, 1997). Thus violence becomes part of prison life and is justified and/or becomes acceptable when used systematically by staff for maintaining order. Violence in prisons may be perceived in different forms. For example, it may be indicative of prison officers tolerating, or failing to address, prisoner-prisoner, staff-prisoner and staff-staff violence adequately. It may also underlie psychological violence, indicated in patterns of alienation (Arosalo, 1971). The following section shows how the organisational structure of violence impacts negatively on the relational dynamics among prison staff.

6.6 Masculinity and violence

The idea that violence (actual or perceived) may adversely affect the relational dynamics between staff within prisons is worth examining in detail because it may provide an insight into how people relate to violence within this environment.

For the purpose of this discussion, a culture of violence is defined as a perceived or actual verbal or emotional threat, or physical attack, on an individual's person (staff/prisoner) by another/others (staff/prisoner/group/organisation), while fulfilling his/her/their work duty (Liebling, 2000). This definition takes into account that a culture of violence may be structurally embedded in the practices of an organisation. This may involve groups as well as the organisation, not solely individuals.

I will now refer to a third participant to expand my discussion further. Rosa is a 48-year-old prison officer. During her first interview she described her apprehension about working at HMP Kerma; it was the first prison she had worked in. Rosa begins the extract by describing how she became a member of the Prison officers Association (POA) union. She also states that at the time there was a strike taking place and she was unsure as to whether she would begin working on her appointed date. Rosa alludes to the risk of violence when she describes the rumour that was circulating when she started working at HMP Kerma.

Contract ended September 1988 and was supposed to start Kerma the 9th and the strike was on [Rosa chuckles]. My God, so we met the union man, who was I can't remember his name, big union boss at the time, begins with B, can't remember now Bambi, Buggar, [MT giggles] came to the training school at the time the strike was on, so [MT giggles] we said look what should we do? He saying well sign up and we'll tell you [MT giggles]. So that's how I ended up in the POA [Prison officers Association]. So we signed up and he still didn't tell us what to do. So luckily, God had it to be when we went in on the 9th the strike had just finished and we gone in now and the rumour is a pair of scissors is missing, that's two knives; you've got to walk with your back against the wall. Now, poor me now, didn't know it was a figure of speech [we laugh loud] what am I gonna say? I'm walking with my back against the wall [we laugh loud] for about two weeks. Oh gosh, I'm walking down the landing and as soon as I hear something behind me, that's me... [we laugh loud]. And at the time, boy, I'm really... [Rosa laughs]. So anyway, urm, Gordon Bennett. Yeah so urm, yeah so (1) then I started to understand now, seeing the behaviour of staff to prisoners, I realised why, although it's a figure of speech, why that really could have been the truth. Then I realised that staff provoke prisoners and yes somebody could get it in their back and I thought you know what that's not gonna be me. And then it comes to a point when staff provoke prisoners and it's the innocent staff get problems. So, urm, where I came, huh Gordon Bennett where I came across that experience.

This extract shows how the threat of violence is communicated to new staff subtly through the use of language in a metaphorical way. The information that a pair of scissors, which equates to two knives, have gone missing and the advice to walk with your back against the wall is utilised in two ways. In one way, it raises new staff awareness to the high risk of violence, but it also provides an example of how staff may protect themselves. There is also an underlying message in this figure of speech. The metaphor inadvertently suggests that staff need to protect themselves, rather than rely on their colleagues for protection. This illustrates how mistrust and officer solidarity contradict each other in the early stages of prison officers' careers, that is, there is a lack of trust between new prison officers and existing prison officers. This may lead to tension, which in turn produces anxiety and the instigation of social defenses such as suspicion and mistrust.

Rosa also points out that some staff provoke prisoners and 'innocent staff get problems'. This comment subtly conveys fear as well as highlighting the dynamic interaction between individuals. I suggest that 'innocent' may be used to refer to 'good' staff, in contrast to 'bad' staff who provoke prisoners. This highlights a division between staff, creating a 'them and us' culture, whereby different groups of staff may take up positions ascribed to them. Perhaps this is related to the culture of violence. Prisons create an environment of violence that some staff may fear, and thus a division between staff groups is created. This in turn produces tension and conflict. This division is further laden with racial and gender undertones.

The incidence of staff provoking prisoners may be understood in a different way, in relation to power with an undercurrent of projected violence. Rosa's account provides an insight into how angry staff, through projective identification, may initiate anger or violence that leads to prisoners believing they have reason to be angry or violent towards a member of staff. This might be unconscious because the manipulator may not know what he or she is doing.

The above extract may be linked to the whole process of 'induction' into the prison culture, in relation to the way POELTs are informally introduced to the culture of mistrust, violence and suspicion. Such a way of experiencing prison reality, that is, through the lens of this aspect of organisational culture, underlines the way things are done within prisons.

In Chapter 2 I mentioned that white male prison staff, specifically prison officers, comprised the largest staff group by far, with black women (both operational and non-operational) being the smallest employee group. This may put pressure on black women to assimilate into their staff group because their differing backgrounds, experiences, values and gendered racialisation may affect relational dynamics between colleagues. This in turn positions black women on the margins, where they may experience isolation, suspicion and mistrust. Indeed, from the beginning of Rosa's prison officer career she was suspicious and began to have doubts about her colleagues' genuineness and integrity because she felt staff provoked prisoners that might lead to staff being attacked. This idea

may be linked to the prime task of the organisation as a whole, which is to punish, protect and rehabilitate, and which, being contradictory positions, may symbolise a lack of trust throughout the whole organisation. The idea of mistrust is very significant, because it demonstrates how the culture of the organisation may actively encourage certain behaviours and practices.

Rosa's lack of trust shown towards her colleagues and prisoners is unspoken, but regulates her engagement with them. Her contact with prisoners during the execution of her duties is structured in accordance with the instructions given by her colleagues, yet she remains wary of these instructions.

In the following account Rosa describes a housekeeping task that occurs in every prison, every day: cleaning. All newly trained prison officers during their POELT period complete cleaning officer duties. This involves supervising prisoners cleaning different areas of their residential units, including the toilets, landings, stairs, etc. It is one of the most despised jobs and is loathed by prison officers. Newly trained prison officers spend a period of time shadowing experienced officers completing various tasks. This is an example of the structural hierarchy that reflects the character of the organisation. Rosa explains:

So I've got an idea generally what we're doing, and cleaning, in fact my past from about 11 and a half, I had a cleaning job pretending I was a certain age [MT giggles], urm so knew how to clean, then now in the prison, got to clean and now how security is paramount as, as number 1. (1) So I done the cleaning task wrote down the way they said it's got to be done. So I'm telling the girls I want it to be done this way, they're telling me no (3). 'No miss', [Rosa impersonates the prisoner] (4) so I'm saying this is the way I was trained to do it, this is the way you're going to do it. But they said 'Nah miss', but the way they said, good thing I listened to what they said, because the 'no' and the refuse to do it, it wasn't a defiant 'no'; it was 'No miss we've done it before and we do it like this'. So I said okay, show me how you do it then. So she did it, security intact whatever, yeah makes sense common sense, way to do it anyway, go ahead. So I realised when they were showing me [(MT giggles) they showed it me wrong on purpose. [Rosa is here referring to her colleagues] So that would have made conflict with the girls and it's and now, look where I'm gonna have conflict with the girls, me lock in a stairwell, with nine woman [Rosa speaks in Jamaican patois], on my own. So what can I do on my own? Direct order, you're nicked, you're charged, they're gonna kill me [Rosa speaks in an authoritarian voice]. So I realised I was set up.

Rosa's suspicion of her colleagues is actualised when she realises that her colleague's guidelines for cleaning were incorrect; she believes her colleague deliberately placed her in a dangerous situation. I explained earlier how the undertones of the metaphor implied there was a risk of staff provoking prisoners to attack other staff, therefore you should:

‘walk with your back against the wall’. Rosa links this connotation to the cleaning incident. She believes the officer had knowingly shown her a wrong technique, to antagonise the prisoners and place her in a vulnerable position. This incident also shows that prison officers must learn to adjust to ambiguous and/or conflicting directives to find the most appropriate action. Furthermore, Rosa’s comment ‘good thing I listened to what they said’ is an illustration of two significant points. First, it was a transgression of prison officer culture. Here, I refer to the fact that Rosa disregarded the instructions given to her by her colleague and allowed the prisoners to complete the cleaning task the way they suggested. Second, it shows how shared racial identity (the prisoner was a black female) acted as a communicative tool, that is, that the word ‘no’ was not interpreted as defiance but rather as a means to show Rosa an alternative method of completing the task. In addition, it was premised on an ethnic and gendered identification.

Towards the end of the above account, a sense of shared identification between Rosa and the prisoners can be seen, and this quite possibly also extends to me. I recall that when Rosa shared her feelings of being deliberately set up by her white colleagues, I was able to relate to this because for a moment we were reminded of our ‘outsider within’ position. We realised that our gendered racialisation made it difficult for us to integrate fully into our staff group, and this created a disconnect that resulted both in our need for self-preservation in the workplace and a connection between us.

The discussions thus far have indicated that suspicion, mistrust and violence are deep-rooted attitudes and behaviours held and practised by members of the organisation; these help to shape prison officers' activities and reflect the identity of the organisation. This theoretical orientation is supported by Steven Ott, who puts forward the view that 'organisation behaviours and decisions are almost pre-determined' (1989, p. 2) by culture.

The primary aim of this chapter was to illustrate how a dysfunctional consequence of exaggerated mistrust and suspicion in British prisons results from the harsh reality of a culture of violence. I endeavoured to apply an organisational cultural framework to better understand the impact of organisational behaviour and practices on the psychosocial experience of black women employees within this occupational space. The discussions support the notion that a prison culture is permeated by suspicion, mistrust and violence. This restrains the richness of racial difference amongst staff and thus intensifies the relational dynamics between staff from different racial groups. Therefore, the organisational culture may encourage and perpetuate adverse gender and racial dynamics between staff groups, especially between black women and their white colleagues, because interwoven in the relationship dynamics is not only race but also gender. This may not always be obvious to the individual. Suspicion and mistrust may lead to individuals not recognising each other as valuable members of the organisation, and thus empathy and respect may decrease. A notable aspect of the tension created by mistrust and suspicion, highlighted by the participants' narratives in this chapter, was the way they experienced not being trusted and the reciprocity of not trusting their

colleagues. Suspicion and exclusion evokes a sense of not belonging; the person who does not belong is therefore an 'outsider within' and not fully accepted by his or her peers. This view sets the foundation for my exploration in Chapters 7 to 10. I aim to examine how the organisation locates black women in unique subject positions, and which may lead them to draw on a discourse of SBW and, either consciously and/or unconsciously, mobilise the characteristics related to this ideology to overcome adversity that may be produced by racism and sexism, perhaps before the SBW ideology is even fully formed or acknowledged.

7 Who Am I? And Who Are We?

From Individual to Prison Officer: A Psychodynamic Analysis of the Transition

I am not the oppressor

Because I hold the keys.

I am a prison officer

A secret I must keep.

Marcia Thomas

In this chapter I seek to develop a psychodynamic perspective of the link between organisational identity and new black female prison officer recruits' transition to prison officers, and highlight the tension created by the link between individual identity, organisational culture and the boundaries between them. By combining organisational psychodynamics theory and focusing on the tacit, implicit, and unconscious dimensions of organisational life with intersectionality theory, which emphasises the impact of the intersection of race and gender on the daily reality of black women, I argue that newly recruited black female prison officers undergo both informal and formal initiation processes. This involves new recruits learning to negotiate new ways of relating to, and feeling a part of, the organisation, while maintaining their cultural identity as black women. Tension may occur when new black female employees join organisations that are

dominated by white men, because they disrupt pre-existing gender and racial boundaries. The term 'boundary' in this context will be applied to examine how individuals manage the interface between individual, professional and organisational identities (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003; Brown, 2001; Gioia, 1998). It will also be used to examine how individuals adhere to, and/or challenge, role expectations within institutions.

The psychodynamic perspective I develop here suggests prisons are not motivated to embed positive race relations between black and white staff, because racial difference entails anxiety-provoking identity change. Rather, they maintain individual and collective behaviours and practices by not questioning existing self-concepts and the culture of the organisation. In practice, this means that while some individuals engage in race relations activities, the organisation develops structures and employs practices to preserve existing arrangements that perpetuate white superiority and masculinity. In light of the points raised in the opening discussion of this chapter, I now consider how identity impacts on the individual and the organisation.

Identity is central to the conception of what it means to be a person. Individuals enter organisations with their own values, beliefs and past experience, entwined with social identities, such as gender and race, which form their identity. An organisation's identity derives from its culture, which is produced by the shared values, practices and collective identity of its members. An individual's identity, however, may be different to the organisation's identity. According to Stuart Albert and David Whetten (1985) an

organisation's identity embodies the characteristics of an organisation, which is both unconsciously and consciously agreed by its members; thus the organisation's characteristics are perceived to be central and distinctive to the organisation. This is different to professional identity that encompasses elements of individuals' personal lives, and which includes an interaction between personal experiences of individuals and the social, cultural and work environment in which they function on a daily basis, as well as a connection to their role and nature of the work they perform. Sonia James-Wilson, referring to teachers' professional identity, asserts:

The ways in which teachers form their professional identities are influenced by both how they feel about themselves and how they feel about their students. This professional identity helps them to position or situate themselves in relation to their students and to make appropriate and effective adjustments in their practice and their beliefs about, and engagement with, students (2001, p. 29).

James-Wilson's assertion implies that professional identity evolves over time and is fluid, rather than fixed. She also talks about the impact of the emotional experience that people encounter in their workplace, and how it affects their identity and relationships with others in a distinctive way. These are important points because they highlight the complexity of how individual identity and professional identity may relate to, or contradict, the organisation's identity.

Within prisons, an individual's identity is based in part on the social groups, for example, racial and gender groups, and institutional groups, such as operational/non-operational, to which he or she belongs; hence identification with these groups may influence the individual's subjectivity. Prison staff are members of two main groups, operational and non-operational, and within these groups a number of smaller groups exist. These various groups form the identity of the organisation, including the divisions and departments. In other words, organisations are structured both formally and informally, and this affects the inter-relationships between individuals. When new people enter organisations they disturb the existing working arrangements and relational dynamics between group members. The forming of new inter-relationships may create new boundaries, which alter how individuals and groups relate to each other in organisations. Thus, individuals forge new identities both with and within organisations as new groups are formed.

This chapter focuses on the narrative of two participants. One is a prison officer and the other a Temporary Promoted Senior Officer (TPSO). I will examine the impact of racial dynamics on these participants. The participants' accounts indicate that, increasingly, the actions and statements of white colleagues simultaneously affect organisational identity and create psychosocial experiences laden with anxiety and mistrust. This is in part due to the interactions between staff racial groups at all levels within the organisation. I plan to bring together the two theoretical perspectives to show how black female prison officers take up their role in establishments by negotiating the formal, informal and unconscious boundaries they encounter. My discussions focus on specific incidents of Control & Restraint (C&R) as presented by the two participants during their interviews,

with the aim of gaining an insight into their interpretation of the incidents, and the effects the incidents had on them in developing their prison officer identity. I also put forward the suggestion that C&R has two purposes: that it is used as a social defense, which aims to enable prison officers to avoid the experience of anxiety, guilt, doubt or uncertainty when faced with challenges to their authority, and, second, that it has a subtle function in that it is used to initiate black women into the racial, discriminatory and violent informal life of prisons.

7.1 What individuals bring with them

The negative reputation of prisons may have an impact on new recruits because prisons have a reputation for being oppressive and perpetuating racial and gender inequality. Focusing specifically on racial discrimination, a thematic review of British prisons found that black prisoners and black staff encountered racial discrimination (HMIP, 2005). The legacy of racial discrimination in prisons is likely to have a significant impact on black women when they first join the service as racial inequality in prisons mirrors racial oppression in society. Therefore, black women enter this occupation with additional feelings of racial isolation on account of the low numbers of black employees; guilt associated with their position as employees (by this I mean taking on the role of oppressor); and feelings of inadequacy derived from internalised racism, that is, the embracing of negative racial stereotypes in their psyche (McKenzie-Mavinga, 2009). In addition, black women enter the service expecting to encounter gender stereotypes and sexism as a result of the masculinised hierarchical structures (Goldberg and Essed, 2007)

within prisons. This is connected to the idea of organisation-in-the-mind, a concept discussed in Chapter 5.

A bicultural perspective (Bell, 1990) may be used to explain the position black women find themselves in when working in prisons. I focus specifically on 'bicultural' rather than 'multicultural', because my focus here is on individuals' subjective perception of managing their racial identity within a white organisation. In simple terms, this concept captures the degree to which black women perceive their racial identity within a white male-dominated organisation and how they cope with this experience. I want to establish whether black women view themselves as living between cultures and, if so, whether the cultures are deemed to be conflictual and disparate, which may lead to an inability to create an integrated black woman–prison officer identity as they pursue and develop their careers in an organisation that position them as minorities because of their gendered racialisation. They may feel pressured to maintain a balance between their personal life within the black community and their position within the organisation, and may feel forced to split their allegiance between the organisation, the black community, and themselves as black women. Scholars such as Ella Bell (1990) have taken a similar approach to examine the experience of black women working in white dominated organisations. Bell's research, completed in the US, applied a bicultural identity framework as a lens to examine black women's career development. Bell found that black career women used compartmentalisation to manoeuvre their bicultural identity that allowed them to maintain a work identity at work and a home identity at home. I expand Bell's idea by taking into account additional pressures, that is, working in masculine and

racially oppressive environments such as prisons, to think about the oppositional cultures these create and the impact on the psychosocial experience of black women. The manifestations of gender and race within the organisational dynamics may create additional tension that may be unconscious and/or conscious. That is, black women may feel pressured to assimilate into a white, male-dominated culture that exists within the Prison Service and suppress their racial and gendered identity. This may lead to black women being located on the margins where they experience isolation and feelings of invisibility/visibility as well as unconscious phantasies of being attacked and annihilated, with the consequent mobilisation of psychic defenses.

An example of the tension black women experience as a result of working in prisons is shown in Rosa's account. Here she describes a situation that took place at the end of one of her shifts at HMP Kerma. She was instructed by the Principle Officer (PO) to leave work early, and this was reinforced by her colleague. On her return to work the following day, Rosa was informed by her colleague that she was the subject of ridicule by another colleague. Rosa was deeply upset about this and very angry to the point where she took this negative feeling home and projected it on to her four-year-old son. Rosa explains:

They called me 'Littlen' because I was one of the youngest members of staff there and I'm new, urm at the time. 'Littlen you can go.' [Rosa is imitating a colleague] I said 'I can't go,' she said 'What do you mean?' We went into the room, I said 'If I go early then she will go back and tell management and they'll tell me off' and I

told her about that, was said before to me, do my and nothing more whatever.

‘What! You wait there’ she said, I think she was a SO [Senior Officer]. She went upstairs to the centre spoke to somebody, Orderly Officer and then the PO come down stairs and stood in the middle of the gate lodge and told me (1) I think it was quarter to yeah five. ‘Littlen you can go.’ [Rosa says this in a loud voice] [MT giggles] [Rosa claps her hands.] Well I thought PO told me to go, so I went, I left a few minutes early. Huh, (4) When I got in the morning, got, I get there for half six in the morning. And when I got in now, this woman had got in early to let night staff go and she said, greeted me as normal and she said ‘Littlen, last night was full of you’ and then she relate the scenario this Bitch used to try and say I was stupid like the other black girl and I’ve got to work with her that day. A mad, a mad [MT giggles] a mad. Anyway, I got through the day. Got home, my son was four and he’s now a really good reader. He’s got these sets of books called the Mog – a witch and her cat [MT giggles] and he’s reading really well and I got home now. ‘Mum, Mum read my book, let me read my book to you.’ (1) And I run him. When I realised now, I wasn’t in the mood to do it, but I wasn’t running him because of him, I’m running because of work. My head crumbled and I thought, look at this now, look at what this job is doing to me and my pickney [child].

The account is very interesting because there are a lot of nuances in relation to gender, race, age and length of service. The extract also speaks to the organisational psychodynamics in respect of hierarchy, structure, power and relational dynamics

between individuals. These are all worth dissecting because they show how these different elements create a series of constellations that create a unique psychosocial encounter for Rosa.

Rosa begins by explaining that her colleagues call her 'Littlen' because of her age and because she is a new recruit. This term has many connotations with regard to age and length of service, which Rosa states are the reasons for her nickname. It may also have hidden gender meanings because it may only be used for new female recruits and not new male recruits. Rosa does not state whether male recruits are referred to as 'Littlen', or whether this term is used for all new recruits, or just her. The term 'Littlen' may also have racial meanings, if the historical legacy of colonisation and the terms 'boy' and 'girl' are taken into consideration, as these words were used by white people to refer to black adults and children. The term implies a lack of authority and a subordinate, subject position.

The situation itself describes an incident in which the authority figure—PO instructs Rosa 'Littlen you can go.' The raising of the voice symbolises authority and power on the part of the PO, who orders Rosa to go home. Rosa's subordinate position is highlighted by her obedience to the demand to go home, even though she is apprehensive about leaving early. In addition, her powerless position that might be a result of various elements, such as her age, gender, race and POELT status, is emphasised by the way in which her apprehensions about leaving work early are ignored. This is exacerbated by her being

informed the following day that she has been the subject of malicious gossip. In the following quote, Rosa repeats what her colleague told her and her feelings about what was said are exemplified:

‘Littlen, last night was full of you’ and then she relate the scenario this Bitch used to try and say I was stupid like the other black girl and I’ve got to work with her that day.

There is a strong sense of Rosa’s annoyance and anger. It is difficult to know for sure whether Rosa’s annoyance is specifically about being subject to ridicule by her colleague for leaving early, or because the member of staff was making disparaging remarks about her and another black female colleague, as the quote suggests that a comparison is being made between Rosa and someone else. The issue of racial identity in this quote is striking because it appears that the comment is being experienced as an attack not only on Rosa personally, but also against her racial identity.

Finally, the account provides a testament to how the negative culture of ridicule, criticism and being located in a subordinate position, such as being referred to as ‘Littlen’ at work, can consume an individual to the point where it affects them in their personal life. This can lead to torment, as shown at the end of Rosa’s account: ‘My head crumbled and I thought, look at this now, look at what this job is doing to me and my pickney.’ What you

see here is that Rosa was unable to compartmentalise her work life and personal life and thus experiences guilt. She is reflecting on the source of her agitation directed towards her son, and relates it to her workplace conflict. This discussion has shown how anxiety and guilt occurs when work and personal life become blurred.

7.2 Defensiveness versus containment

Robert Hinshelwood and Wilhelm Skogstad (2000) completed a study in the UK which investigated how specific tasks, personal anxieties and conflicts affect an organisation's culture. They found that these elements affect institutions in different ways. They state this is because institutions are made up of different people with different roles to play within the organisation. The anxieties they bring with them may either be sufficiently contained (Bion, 1959) or they may not be contained, which then creates a series of defense systems. Wilfred Bion's theory of container-contained is centrally concerned with the processing (dreams) of thoughts derived from lived emotional experience. 'It addresses the dynamic interaction of predominantly unconscious thoughts (the contained) and the capacity for dreaming and thinking those thoughts (the container)' (Ogden, 2004, p. 1349) Hence, this concept 'addresses not what we think, but the way we think' (Ogden, 2004, p. 1354), in simple terms, how we process lived experience and what occurs psychically. For Bion, the term 'container' conveys a means of processing a range of experiences from the most destructive to that which is life-promoting. This is a key point, because an organisation that can contain has the ability to help its members process

and detoxify emotional experiences that promote anxiety. A non-containing organisation cannot do this and may then reinforce anxiety and destructive patterns of relating.

Prisons are complex systems of interrelated departments, processes, hierarchies and people. There is clearly a boundary between what is 'inside' the organisation and what is 'outside'; this is evident from the fact that prisons are surrounded by 30-foot walls, the purpose of which is to prevent escape. However, the wall may be viewed from a different angle. The wall acts as a boundary that separates prison life from the external world, thus creating a total institution (Pabjan, 2005). Locked cells and barred windows create a sense of separation; thus, prisoners are separated from others. These have symbolic resonance to the psychodynamic relationships that occur within the organisation. For example, boundaries are created between staff groups, such as operational staff and non-operational staff, by the tasks and roles they perform. Individuals will also be socially inscribed as racialised and gendered subjects, as these will also have organisational, conscious and unconscious meanings. This is shown in the extract below, taken from Rosa's narrative. Rosa is describing a POELT exercise that involved participants speaking derogatory terms out loud.

There was an exercise where we had to do a name calling session. And in my group because I suppose they got to know me and they liked me and I wasn't what they thought black people were they were offended (2) they didn't want to offend me, they didn't want to say anything through fear of offending me.

This activity demonstrates the white trainers' cultural conditioning process that stems from racial bias and prejudice, and which may be unbeknown to them. The activity itself subtly reinforces racial discrimination because of the lack of awareness of the dynamics of the group. Rosa points this out when she says 'they didn't want to offend me'; here she is referring to the white participants' uneasiness about saying racially inappropriate words that might offend her. This awareness of the insensitivity of the exercise illustrates that the activity created a psychological dilemma and disparity amongst the group. The exercise might have been harmful to the well-being and self-esteem of Rosa, and might have produced anxiety. This is denoted in her comment 'they were offended'; this is a Freudian slip, because she is referring to the group not wanting to offend her, but instead states that the group was offended. This might be a projection of her own feelings, which are too painful to think about. A possible reason for this might be because this would make her feel isolated from the group, thus creating racial boundaries that needed to be avoided.

The wall might also manifest itself in the social defenses devised to maintain organisational processes. Boundaries are evident within staff sub-groups as shown in the distinction between POELTs and prison officers. During this period POELTs are generally assigned the more mundane tasks such as supervising prisoners' cleaning duties as illustrated in Chapter 6. The division of task and title amongst the prison officer group

may inadvertently affect the unconscious relational dynamics within this group, which involves a series of defenses within the prison officer group.

Focusing specifically on black female POELTs, the relational dynamics between this group of staff and their white colleagues may be significantly impacted by racial and gender manifestations because they are not part of the dominant group. Furthermore, their POELT status locates them in a subservient position, thus possibly putting pressure on them to be submissive and comply with practices and procedures that they may find discriminatory. In keeping with the mix of theoretical approaches I work with, it would follow that black female new recruits' lives would comprise their beliefs and expectations, together with unconscious phantasies derived from their gendered racialisation. Black women POELTs have to interact with the environment in which they work, continually striving to maintain a balance between their own internal needs and the demands of others. This may create anxiety and tension for the individual, but also disruption for the organisation when practices such as discriminatory procedures, that is, racially motivated use of C&R, are threatened by the presence of black women, who may disagree with, or challenge, the misconduct by proposing alternative responses to using C&R. There is also the possibility that part of the disruption may be caused by the fact that white prison officers may feel under scrutiny and vulnerable to the accusation of racism.

7.3 Organisational psychodynamics and Prison Officer Entry Level Training (POELT)

New prison officers' experience manifests as an intense systemic dynamic involving existing staff, trainers, the POELT and the organisational culture. The relationship between POELTs and existing staff is characterised by mutual defense mechanisms such as splitting, projection and projective identification. These are unconscious aspects related to the organisational culture and practice. There are also conscious, social aspects of relating, for example, between white male/female prison officers and black female prison officers. I gave an example of this in Chapter 6 when I referred to Trina's account of the way new prison officers are shunned and feel isolated from the prison officer group because they are treated with suspicion. Another example of the way defense mechanisms are initiated between POELTs and existing prison officers is illustrated in Rosa's extract below.

Anyway (5) anyway, oh yeah, now, I witnessed staff speaking about another member of staff, anyway their speaking about this black member of staff (2) was I supposed to know? Yeah they say it blatantly in front of me. Like they say 'Kerryann she's slow, she's got no brain matter up there', urm, and 'she's stupid'. So it's said publicly open so I can hear, okay. So I thought to myself you know what they're not going to say that about me. Then come the time when they use an incident when they definitely know it didn't go like that to try and say oh, Rosa is the same as her. (2)

This extract highlights Rosa's perceived negative perception of a white member of staff towards a black female prison officer, and possibly black female staff in general. It is unclear whether the black female mentioned above was a POELT, however her gender and race are clearly significant and the issue of competence is in relation to these social characteristics. Rosa was determined not to have a similar negative image of herself as a black female created about herself. The white female prison officer's negative perception of her black female colleague and Rosa's determination not to be viewed in the same way may have caused mutual projection. This caused anxiety because the white female prison officer would have needed to depend on Rosa because she was a member of the team, in whom she had psychically invested the incompetent parts of herself. On the other hand, Rosa, a black female POELT, may have felt that she could not fully trust this colleague, and thus there is an acceptance of her colleague's projections which is conveyed in her determination to be efficient in her work and not to be described in the same way as her black female colleague.

So far, I have shown how anxiety is produced by various elements, and not just by the presence of new recruits. It is still worth noting that the start of a new occupation and joining an organisation has a frightening, and sometimes disheartening, unconscious life of its own. This life functions below the surface of the individual and staff group behaviour; it is filled with anxiety that is projected between the group members. This may also be conscious, formal and structured, which may feed into unconscious aspects

of the organisation. The splitting of the prison officer group, with new recruits labelled POELTs, demonstrates the anxiety created by new recruits. It may be further suggested that black women as gendered and racialised subjects experience anxiety not only in relation to being new employees, but also as a result of their marginalised position as gendered and racialised subjects. I have also shown that black women as gendered and racialised subjects create unique relational dynamics within prisons, that is, as members of oppressed racial and gender groups their very presence in a white, male-dominated organisation, renowned for racial discriminatory practices (Edgar, 2010; HMIP, 2005), destabilises the predominant assumptions about who prison officers are. It also creates suspicion generated towards racial difference, producing anxiety within the organisation that needs to be defended against. This may affect the way colleagues from the dominant groups (white male/female) view black women employees. Likewise, black women as members of minority groups experience their working reality from a racial and gendered standpoint, which affects the relational dynamics of the organisation highlighted by race relations studies and gender studies in prisons (HMIP, 2005; Zimmer, 1986).

I will now focus on prison officer training, following the approach of Andrew Jefferson who asserts that a 'structural homology between training schools and prisons' (2007, p. 255) exists. I interpret Jefferson's comment as referring to the similarities between prison officer training school and the activities within them, and the duties and tasks when working in prisons. This highlights how the former embeds, and the latter perpetuates, the formal practices of the organisation, which may initiate defense mechanisms to avoid anxiety.

7.4 POELT training from a black woman's perspective

The purpose of prison officer training is to prepare new prison officers to work in prisons. Gresham Sykes (1958) criticises prison officer training by stating that prison work cannot be taught in lectures and discussions. The POELT period includes residential training, which involves a fitness test, managing different prison scenarios, and a combination of classroom and practical activities. POELTs also spend time working in prisons. A challenge faced by new prison officers is adapting to working in a prison environment, as well as meeting the various demands placed on them by their colleagues and prisoners.

The POELT period also exposes new recruits to the ways in which white male culture dominates prison policies and practices, which create unfair disparities between minority and majority groups. These are so deeply ingrained in prison culture that they are nearly invisible; thus white men, who tend to be in positions of authority, are unaware of the advantages they enjoy in the workplace and how their attitudes and actions unintentionally discriminate against black women. An example of the way the intersection of gender and race, and the family responsibilities associated with being a black woman, are not considered by a POELT trainer is shown in Rosa's account.

I was late one day, I was single, I had young kids at the time and urm, I think the train was late or something, so and I had to get here the train (3) urm every 20

minutes, anyway ooh I was 10 minutes late. And, he really tore strips off me and I thought ooh that's not very nice. Alright if I went to school late they wouldn't be that harsh you know. But anyway I was never late again. [MT giggles]

This account is rich with examples and incidents of gender and racial inequality which manifests itself in a distinct way. White male superiority was communicated in a hostile and aggressive manner to Rosa. This is illustrated by the statement 'he really tore strips off me'. The SO's behaviour was clearly meant to intimidate Rosa to make sure she would be punctual in future. This response to her lateness indicates that there was no opportunity for her to provide an explanation. Moreover, her gender and racial identity was minimised and made insignificant by the sheer lack of interest shown for the reason why she was late. Rosa explains that she was a single mother, which implies that she was fulfilling two roles: matriarch and POELT. The lack of interest shown by the SO and Rosa's response, 'I was never late again', nullifies her reality of being a single parent and creates extra pressure for her to compartmentalise her personal and work life.

In the incident above Rosa also makes reference to being treated as though she was at school. She mentions this again in the extract below.

First day was Kerma, oh, bit scary huh, [MT giggles] didn't know what to expect, urm (1) anyway they were teaching us basically jail craft, I suppose. Urm, (3) I

just don't know it was like going to school really and we learning something, so the only bit about it that I remember that was kinda urgh, (3) was I, I didn't like the place (2) and I thought (2) urgh we did 2 weeks induction and (3) that was just clinical and...

Rosa may be using her school experience to make sense of her POELT period, especially the negative incident she referred to earlier and the whole training experience. These incidents highlight the use of power, which allows senior staff to influence the behaviour of others (Liebling and Price, 2001), and which is illustrated in the way the trainer scolded Rosa for her lateness. She was made to feel infantile. Ironically, in the following extract, Rosa emphasises that her instructors encouraged POELTs to view their training as the best period of their career, and she also states that she really enjoyed this period.

And for me, it was they kept saying to us this will be the best time of your service so enjoy it. And let me tell you I enjoyed it [Rosa giggles]. Really enjoyed it.

This period acts as a transition period in which POELTs form allegiances and the prison officers' norms (Kauffman, 1988) are indoctrinated. This involves a process of formal and informal training.

Prisons are governed by both formal and informal rules (Kauffman, 1988), and adjusting to the formal rules is often easier than adjusting to the informal ones. Formal rules are part of the formal organisation: the job description, procedures and documents that specify how individuals should work with each other. Henceforth, the formal organisation is the official, sanctioned way of doing things, and this is taught during the POELT period.

There is also a subtle set of rules that govern behaviour that form part of the informal organisation: a pattern of work relationships that perpetuate the informal culture to ensure work is accomplished. The informal organisation also includes customs and traditions that develop in the institution. According to Alison Liebling and David Price (2001), POELTs are taught 'value training' that encourages courage, honesty and integrity, qualities that are deemed important for working in prisons. The following account provides a flavour of how discipline, order, rules and hierarchy are established during the first 12 months of a prison officer's career, and the extract highlights how informal and formal training are entwined. Rosa describes her time as a POELT at a Prison Service training college.

Urm anyway went to the training school where there was 250 of us who were actually London recruited, recruited specifically for London. Urm out of the 240 (2) people there were (1) only 3 of us that were black [we giggle]...

Really enjoyed it because we had the race relations lessons and although I was part of, we had twin sessions of about 22 people in each class something. So we had the same tutors and I was in D section urm and then I realised, because we got on well as a group in the end I realise well we realise what was said in the race relations section to C section wasn't said the same to D section...

The notion of the carceral can be used as the first discussion point to show how new recruits are introduced to the carceral space. 'Carceral' spaces are where individuals are confined, subject to surveillance, or otherwise deprived of essential freedoms (Carceral Geographies, 2009). I refer to the notion of carceral space to show how during Rosa's POELT training, the 250 new recruits were divided into groups. Each group was observed, assessed and provided with different scenarios. This created divisions between the groups, which symbolically replicated prisons, with regard to 'who is inside and who is outside', 'who is good and who is bad', 'who is included and who is excluded'. The lack of control of the group formation and activities did not prevent members of the 250 cohort from negating the division between groups by communicating with each other and sharing what was happening in their respective groups. Rosa alludes to this when she states 'I realise well we realise what was said in the race relations section to C section wasn't said the same to D section'. Despite the group being divided, they were able to connect with each other and form a community beyond the group division.

The idea of carceral space may be used to explain the POELT training period during the residential, because it can tell us something about being under surveillance and confinement (with regard to having to stay at the training college for a period of time), and a lack of freedom of choice in relation to having to participate in all training activities to successfully pass the POELT period. This is in contrast to those who dwell 'outside' the boundaries of such carceral localities, who are not under surveillance, are not subject to confinement, and have the choice as to whether or not they participate in training activities.

The next lengthy extract provides an example of how Rosa was under surveillance.

So where prior to that point as far as the female tutor was concerned, urm I was going to fail the course, because I wasn't, they asked for a volunteer, my confidence wasn't so, urm (1) yeah I wasn't a very, I wasn't outgoing, I was socially I suppose but in that kinda setting I was unsure, not sure what to do and I hated drama at school anyway so I just did not participate because you want me to act like I'm this and I thought I've never been one, so how am I gonna know how they act, you know what I mean? [MT giggles]. So anyway I didn't like acting anyway and this was again acting, I wasn't a lot of role plays and I wasn't volunteer suddenly the one black person in the class you wouldn't see her in daylight, coz [Rosa makes a funny noise] [MT giggles]. Anyway, and I wasn't, I didn't know actually, probably because we're all sitting together (2) argh and

when you say something there's movement going the wrong way and that's how they pick on whoever they're picking on so I obviously I gave the sign. So anyway, urm because I was reluctant to do role plays I suppose they in their tutors' mind or she the female tutor decided that I was going to fail the course. And I can't don't know if, no they didn't call me up at the time but, but it what was done after the session when we realised what was going on. Anyway, because of the name-calling incident and my group now didn't want to offend me. I had to be assertive or, or they described my actions as assertive (2) urm because I got out there and said I wrote some names down first and said whatever and I'd again the whole scenario of it all... Was it shadow, shadow urm we call it brainstorming didn't we? [MT: Yeah] Write on this thing brainstorming, but now you gotta say shadowing, showering, thought showering. So this is what I found myself doing by putting names up and urm I added on one of them as urm (4) urm what it was, it wasn't naming calling, typical things urm (1) said about a black person, that's it, so I did it. I did that section, we did Irish, Scottish and whatever, so I did the black one. So I out on it, so I out on it, big appendages, [Rosa splutters] or big appendage they didn't know what I meant, so to give an idea of what I meant [Rosa says this giggling] I put a hanging nose [we start laughing loudly] and I wouldn't have said I was normally such a, I probably was a bit of a comedian anyway, but a quiet one [MT giggles] so to put that there, then I had to explain, they roared with laughter, it was crazy, but it was a really good session. So urm where I wrote the names down what typical slang names down for black people and things about them, once I got up there and did that and it was really funny the

... Okay. The female tutor then called me aside and said (2) that, how well I did on that exercise and de de de de. The way they were thinking, feeling they thought I was going to fail the course. (1) I thought huh, and she said you know just by doing that I showed I was confident, I was assertive, and all this thing [MT giggles] I oh okay.

The extract above begins with Rosa discussing how a white female tutor was observing her during the training period. She further states that she was aware that the white female tutor was contemplating failing her, but had a change of heart after her participation in a race relations activity. The extract continues with Rosa describing the race relations training session. She explains that she did not enjoy drama and avoided role plays, saying, 'So anyway I didn't like acting anyway and this was again acting, I wasn't a lot of role plays and I wasn't volunteer suddenly the one black person in the class you wouldn't see her in daylight, coz [Rosa makes a funny noise] [MT giggles].' I have interpreted, 'you wouldn't see her in daylight' to be a metaphor for being shy. Although Rosa did not enjoy acting and she was shy, she may have felt she had no choice but to participate in the activity. There may have been an element of racial pressure because Rosa was the only black person in the group. Nevertheless, she was selected to do the role play. Rosa's explanation for being selected is interesting because she implies that she must have given a signal to the white female tutor that resulted in her selection. From a psychodynamic and intersectionality view point, the interaction between Rosa and the white female tutor suggests that there may have been an underlying reason why she was chosen, which was a result of Rosa's race. The white female tutor may not have been

aware of her racial bias, and thus her action and their meanings would have been invisible to her. However, her racial insensitivity with regard to selecting Rosa – the only black person in the group – to make a list of derogatory and stereotypical terms associated with black people – may have been too painful for Rosa to articulate. An example of this is when she says, ‘so I out on it, so I out on it, big appendages...’ Rosa actually means I wrote big appendages, but she never spoke these words. She emphasises that she focused on passing the course rather than explaining what it was like to participate in an activity that was racially degrading.

To summarise, Rosa’s POELT period at the training college and her forced participation in the race relations activity can be understood using the carceral space because the carceral is more than actual walls, cameras, cells and external spaces; carceral spaces are also internal spaces, a logic that informs, whether consciously or unconsciously, the way in which individuals are controlled and managed by people in authority. Notwithstanding, the carceral space also opens up ways of thinking about the potential for resistance and subversion within such spaces, as shown earlier when the groups were sharing information and formed a community. This is also demonstrated in the way Rosa used her knowledge about the white female tutor’s plans to fail her by overcoming her shyness and taking part in an activity that she was not accustomed to participating in.

7.5 Transition from POELT to Prison Officer

During the POELT period, new recruits begin the process of assimilating their own identity with the organisation's identity. This involves negotiating boundaries between individual identity, which includes their unconscious, internalised world of personal relationships, with mental representations that reflect earlier experiences of self and others, and the organisational culture, which is made up of the values, practices and collective identity of employees. Tension may be produced between individuals and groups if the values of the individual do not correspond with the practices of the organisation. Within the prison context, tension may be increased when senior staff's views and new prison officer recruits' views are different. Furthermore, new recruits may feel disempowered to assert their views as a result of staff hierarchy and autocratic practices. Kelsey Kauffman (1988) supports this view when she points out that prison officers sometimes encounter tension with their superiors. The reason for the tension between new recruits and senior staff may vary. For example, there are some staff who believe in harshness and advocate tighter restrictions and more emphasis on security and punitive measures, while there are other staff who promote rehabilitation.

7.6 Racial difference and anxiety

I would like to expand the idea of general tension and boundaries that exist between new recruits and established prison officers to examine how tension may be exacerbated by gender and racial difference amongst staff, focusing specifically on racial incidents involving C&R within prisons. I postulate that the relational dynamics between black women and their white colleagues during racial incidents are psychosocially experienced in relation to gendered racialised manifestations. I am suggesting that this is a result of

black women's cultural socialisation as carers of their community (Combahee River Collective, 1977). In addition, there may be an assumption by white colleagues that black women's presence creates an imbalance, that is that their perception of incidents may be different to their white counterparts. This is illustrated in the acuteness of judgement between white and black staff during racial incidents involving the use of C&R. In some incidents, a black prison officer may perceive a C&R incident escalating from a racial incident while his or her white counterpart may have a different perception (Edgar and Martin, 2004). It is also worth noting that the claim of overuse of C&R on black prisoners is supported by The Prison Service *Race Review* (2008), which reported that black prisoners are more likely than white British prisoners to have force used on them in restraint (REAG, 2008). Unfair treatment of black prisoners largely by white prison officers has plagued race relations in prisons for more than three decades (Phillips, 2012). It is not my intention to focus on the individuals' characteristics involved in the incidents described in the accounts that follow, apart from stating that the decisions to use C&R were made by a white male SO and a white male PO, but rather to show how C&R is a product of the organisational setting of prisons. I will therefore put forward the view that a 'prison culture' (Crawley, 2004a) exists, which stems from a culture of white masculinity and a set of shared values and ideas to cope with the fear of racial difference. C&R is linked to organisational culture – a masculinised and racialised culture – thus racially incited C&R acts as a social defense mechanism to protect white prison officers against anxiety produced by racial difference.

The nature of prison officer work is likely to arouse a great deal of anxiety and other emotions. Therefore, incidents of what is deemed to be prisoner defiance may be frightening and emotionally charged. Contact with prisoners may produce a mixture of feelings: anger towards the offender for committing an offence; a desire to help rehabilitate the offender; or compassion for vulnerable prisoners. Both the prison officer and the prisoner will have a variety of conflicting emotions towards each other, which often surface as patterns in current relationships and interpersonal problems. This highly emotional situation 'bears a striking resemblance to the phantasy situations that exist in every individual in the deepest and most primitive levels of the mind' (Menzies Lyth, 1988, p. 5).

The attitude towards using, and the decision to use, C&R by white prison officers on black prisoners is an indication of a social defense and a social means of repressing members of the black community. Ella is a TSPO who, at the time of being interviewed, worked at HMP Dahomey; the incident she describes happened at HMP Kilwa, the prison where she worked at the start of her career. The C&R incident involved an Irish male prisoner.

Urm finished ... 2002 and then started working for HMP Kilwa, urm, (2) that was 2002 nice big prison CAT A, busy, lots of BME staff like lots of English staff it was just nice, there wasn't really any for me didn't notice any racial tension between the staff, but I did notice a lot of it from staff on black prisoners. Urm, that was quite evident and if you were around then it was definitely more subtle. It

wouldn't happen because I would challenge it, but obviously, and did on many occasions and then I think I was so keen and so eager that I think (1) it was ...

2000. When did I come here, say it was ... 2002, or was it 2003? I can't remember but no it had to be 2 because I just qualified. My first house block and I was working on and one day there was an SO and an officer and this white, Irish, traveller, urm he'd been in out of prison so he was somebody who you knew, and he had gone to court and come back and obviously when they left to go to court their rooms are emptied, he came back from court and they tried to locate him with two African men. He came out and said 'Miss I'm not being funny, and I'm not racist, but I'm not gonna go in a cell with them', he said, 'you know I don't mind being on a wing or associate with them, but I'm not living with them.' So he said, 'I'm not racist I just don't feel comfortable.' So I said 'Okay I'll speak to the SO.' Went upstairs and I told the SO the guy was downstairs waiting by the SO's office, so the SO and another officer went downstairs ... started saying to him.

'Oh urm what's your problem, you not going?' He said 'No'. He [SO] said 'You're Irish aren't you? Yeah scum of the earth, you Pikeys.' So he [Irish prisoner] was saying like 'Yeah, but I hate the English too.' [SO] 'But I really hate the Irish, they're the scum of the earth; they sleep with each other's partners.'

And then the officer was also going with the guy, so the guy didn't respond physically, but kept saying 'Yeah I hate the English too.' Between the two of them this went on for a few minutes they were just being disrespectful to the guy.

So I stood there I'm a new officer and didn't know what to do, but I do know its three people for an incident so I stood there. So anyway the SO must have said to

the guy pick your bags up so he had two black bags in either hand and he picked his bags up, and he went up one flight of stairs and I went to follow as the third officer. And the SO turned round and said 'Don't, stay there.' No don't he didn't say it he just used his hand gesture to say stay there. So I stayed, so 1, 2, 3 on the second flight of stairs the SO took his feet from underneath him so he fell flat on to the stairs and he bent his back and put his knee right in the boy's back and the other officer was like moving his head, but his foot was kicking him in his head and then he pressed them. Where the office is on the 2s [second floor] you could see down in the corner there was an incident going on so the officer pressed the 2s and the rivalry, cavalry team came running in and the next thing you know this guy getting wrapped up and taken to the Seg [care and separation unit] for assault. And I know he never done anything you know and I felt really terrible because I didn't know what to do, I felt ashamed I didn't help him, and I felt empowered you know what I mean, not empowered, disempowered at the same time.

It is important to dissect Ella's account carefully and delve beneath the surface of what was occurring to gain an insight into the psychodynamics of the organisation. Ella begins her account by referring to racial prejudice. The incident stems from the Irish male prisoner's request not to share a cell with two African male prisoners. This in itself could be classified as racial prejudice on the part of the Irish prisoner because of his request not to share with these particular prisoners. Ella had to deal with this racial prejudice and advocate on the prisoner's behalf. She may have felt uncomfortable because on the one hand the Irish male prisoner did not want to share a cell with the African male prisoners

because of their ethnicity. However, Ella did not view his request in this way, possibly because she was familiar with this prisoner. On the other hand, prisoners can request to share cells with different people. Prisoners in general have some flexibility with regards to who they share a cell with, space permitting. For example, prisoners may request to share a cell with associates or relatives, or make a preference to share with a smoker, or someone with similar religious beliefs. Hence, his request was not necessarily a form of defiance. Ella did not view the request as unreasonable or as a racial incident that required a sanction. Instead she chose to advocate on the Irish male prisoner's behalf and request a different cell, rather than force him to share a cell with the African male prisoners. According to Ella, the SO embarked on a tirade of verbal abuse, which the prisoner counteracted.

I put forward the suggestion that the threat of exposure presented by the black female prison officer's presence, and her attempt to advocate on behalf of the Irish prisoner to relocate cells, was perceived as a challenge to the white SO's authority. The anxiety of having to work with ethnic/racial difference was captured in the Irish prisoner's request, but echoed in Ella's presence as a prison officer and thus the SO had to deal with the racial/ethnic difference of not only the prisoners but also within his team. This was projected on to the Irish prisoner who became the scapegoat and was thus verbally attacked.

The physical abuse begins when the prisoner is tripped and falls to the ground. C&R is administered, which obscures the physical abuse. All prison officers are trained to use C&R techniques. C&R is a technique developed to deal with violent incidents to reduce the possibility of injury to prisoners and provides safety for staff. C&R involves a team of four staff whose aim is to overcome the prisoner by subduing him or her by applying pressure to vulnerable points of the prisoner's wrists. Another prison officer holds the prisoner's head, two others take an arm each, while one holds both legs. If the prisoner does not resist, the pressure is reduced. If the prisoner does not comply then the prison officers holding the wrists apply increasing pressure which eventually becomes excruciating. This is known as 'locks'.

On the surface, the incident gives an impression that the application of the C&R technique is an organisational practice that is conscious, mechanistic, predictable and uncomplicated. However, a psychodynamic view provides a different angle. As mentioned earlier, C&R is also used as a social defense that allows white prison officers to 'subdue violent prisoners with something other than overpowering physical force' (Coyle, 2005, p. 151). From an organisational psychodynamic perspective, it can be used to avoid the fear of working within a racial diverse institution and losing control (Cilliers and Koortzen, 2000). In this context, control is related to the fear of black prison officers entering the service with bi-cultural beliefs to assimilate, that is, to be part of the organisation as well as uphold their cultural allegiance. I am therefore suggesting here that the witnessing of malicious and/or direct racial discrimination obscured by C&R techniques is a form of initiation into the informal/unconscious culture and practice of

institutional racism. This initiation takes place within the first 12 months of black female prison officers' careers. It is a means of transmitting the organisation's message that subtle racism is part of everyday reality and that violence, whether physical or psychological, acts to reinforce the realism of repercussions if black staff do not accept racial inequality.

At the end of Ella's account she makes a Freudian slip when she says 'I felt ashamed I didn't help him, and I felt empowered you know what I mean, not empowered, disempowered at the same time.' A slip of the tongue as discussed in Chapter 6 is a concept that originated from Freud's work. Slips of the tongue are speech errors that, according to Freud, reveal what is in a person's unconscious mind. Ella's slip of the tongue may have been motivated by unconscious conflicts. The extract begins with her expressing her shame for not having helped the Irish prisoner during the incident. This is an important point because at the start of Ella's account earlier, she stated vehemently that she would challenge racial discrimination and had challenged it on many occasions. However, she did not challenge her colleagues at the time of the incident involving the Irish prisoner. This might explain the tension she was feeling with regards to simultaneously feeling empowered and disempowered. This may also be related to her 'outsider within' position as a result of the intersection of race and gender. Ella was a member of the prison officer group yet could not challenge the situation, and this highlighted her subordinate position that might have been a result of her prison officer status. Ella may also have felt disempowered because of her social identity, her gender and race that are associated with socially disadvantaged groups (Byrd, 2009a). Indeed, in

this situation she was faced with the dilemma of having to adapt to the norms of the organisation and participating in the racially motivated C&R incident, or having to create new norms and values based on the multiple perspectives she brought to the prison. This may explain why in the first instance she says she was empowered, which is actually the opposite of what she really wanted to say.

7.7 Control and Restraint (C&R)

I now want to look at how anxiety caused by racial difference may be a primary force that leads to an over-reliance on the use of C&R against black prisoners. I also put forward the idea that C&R is used as a means of racially isolating black staff. In the discussion which follows, I examine how C&R acts as a means informally to exclude black female prison officers from the security and safety afforded to white prison officers, who form an allegiance based on racial superiority and masculinity. In the account below, Rosa describes an incident that happened at HMP Kerma. An elderly black woman was taken to HMP Kerma, which was to act as a place of safety on account of her mental ill health; C&R was used on the black female prisoner. Rosa emphasises that racism was a significant factor in the decision to use C&R as a means to abuse the prisoner.

So I jumped in this incident and we had, urm, the job we had had radios. So any problems, soon as they shout on the radio, we have to get to where they the obstruction. We're in reception, anyway and the police brought in a mad black

woman, she could have been, she's older than my mum, she could have been my granny. Then obviously, because of racism [Rosa chuckles] or white woman run off with her man, or the man run, something like that. Anyway, she's cursing them. Yeah what she saying isn't right, but you see she's not well and she's here with us, been brought to us under the Mental Health Act. Why the police brought her to us [MT: 'Right'). So seeing she came to us under the Mental Health Act, urm there is a provision of care, although the policy lead hadn't come out, until 10 years later, but still there's a duty of care, to her... of what she's saying don't take it personal. So she refused to take off her clothes and they're determined they're going in as a team. So I thought give me a minute with her and remember, I'm this shy person who don't speak [MT giggles] that's me asserting myself. So anyway I go in for a minute and I'm speaking to her and I mellowed her right down now and she's going to take off, like she's going to take off her clothes (2). The PO come. 'Right out Miss Rosa', no matter what I said, he put me out, gone in there as a team on this old woman only thing is she's tall, a bit of height. And because of [Rosa sighs] how they grab up this woman and they saw my face, they said 'Rosa go and open the doors'. So I run quick, open all the doors, so they can pick her up and bring her quick, take her up the top. So when I get to the top and I can't hear them, or I don't see them yet, [Rosa speaks in a high pitched voice to emphasise the hastiness of the incident] I don't see them yet. Mi go down de to go see [Rosa speaks in Jamaican patois]. I go down there to see what they are doing. Sorry [MT laughs]. When I got down there, we got two flights of stairs, so there's four bits of stairs I think, for two floors come up two floors and as they go up one,

come up one set of stairs, they say 'lock slip', drive the woman's head into the step [MT 'Oooh'; we both cringe]. And by the time I've seen that, they've done it twice already, yeah [MT 'Oooh'). And when they see me now, the PO ordered me to go back to the top. I vex, I vex, I vex, I mad, a mad, a mad. So, so to come up two flights of stairs they did lock slip six times, drive the, I don't know, know if the woman died, I don't know, yeah [Rosa sounds agitated, this incident seems to still have an effect on her]. But they drive her head into the stairs. And from then I said you know what, (4) I cannot work alongside you lot, because it's about seven a dem against me. If I say that happen, they say I'm lying, and if I ever stick out my neck at that de time. [Rosa speaks in Jamaican patois]. I'd be doing the life sentence now. Anyway, so when we got to C1 now, to put her in the cell, she was lifeless, she's alive, but she couldn't do nothing. I had to take off her clothes, yeah, in the most gentlest way possible.

The incident shows that C&R was not used as a means to subdue the black female prisoner, because Rosa had de-escalated the situation and calmed the prisoner before the PO arrived. Nonetheless, C&R was administered; it was abuse under the guise of C&R, similar to the incident involving the Irish prisoner. Rosa's account indicates that the black female prisoner was deliberately injured by deliberately allowing her head to hit the steps. The term 'lock slip' was a signal to drop the prisoner as a safety measure for when one of the team lost their grip. Rosa stated the prison officers called 'lock slip' multiple times, and on each occasion slammed the prisoner's head into the ground.

At first sight, it would seem that the C&R incidents described by Ella and Rosa indicate an abuse of power and excessive use of C&R, which is not uncommon in British prisons as Michael Cavadino et al. posit:

prison staff are frequently alleged and sometimes proved, to resort unofficially to unapproved and unlawful methods, including deliberate assaults or the use of excessive force in restraining troublesome inmates (2013, p. 212).

Unfortunately, many complaints of excess use of C&R, especially with racial undertones, do not get reported and, when they do, those involved are not made fully accountable because it is difficult to be sure whether excess force has been used. Therefore, it is important to understand how racial superiority and anxiety produced by racial/ethnic difference reveal their numerous manifestations during C&R incidents, the type of impact they have on black female prison officers, the dynamic interaction between perpetrator and witness, and the additional issues and processes that come into play, which lead to black female prison officers either feeling part of, or excluded from, the group.

The use of C&R in the above two incidents provides an illustration of how the organisation develops social defense mechanisms to help prison officers to avoid feelings of anxiety, guilt and uncertainty. In addition, C&R acts as a link between the informal

culture and the social defensive systems. However this social defense fails to alleviate primary anxiety and creates secondary anxiety because new recruits are unable to challenge this practice. The fixed, hierarchical and restricted decision-making process makes it impossible for POELTs' suggestions to be acted upon by seniors, or for the former to complain about discriminatory practices. This may lead to new recruits feeling helpless and disempowered as well as racially isolated, as shown in both Ella and Rosa's accounts. Here I am suggesting that in prison life the defense against anxiety in relation to racial difference is one of the elements that bind the dominant white male group together. What is particularly interesting in the C&R incidents described is the fact that the black women were not members of the white majority group, and that therefore the instinctive and unprocessed agreement that guided the white prison officers' behaviour to use C&R resulted from the group functioning within the basic assumption mentality (Bion, 1961); this action contravened Ella and Rosa's cultural values and beliefs. Hence they found it difficult to agree to the use of C&R in the situations described. Isolation occurred, in part as a result of their inability to challenge the others, or to become 'full members' of the prison officer group. This ultimately intensified the tension and anxiety produced by their racial minority status, and in the end led to racial isolation, shame and disempowerment. It is this position that leads me to consider the tension that is created by the individual's identity, professional identity and organisational identity, and how C&R acts as a means to alleviate the anxiety created by racial difference to perpetuate racial inequality and maintain white superiority in prisons.

I have shown how C&R was used as a social defense mechanism involving two groups of white prison officers unconsciously colluding to protect themselves against anxiety and tension during an incident involving an Irish male prisoner and another incident involving a black female prisoner. The use of C&R was at the expense of using alternative methods to de-escalate the situation and avoid taking on board the suggestions of both Ella and Rosa, whose views were treated as insignificant. In addition, the C&R incidents acted as an induction to the informal culture of prisons. I have also shown that the fear of racial difference and the threat it poses to the organisational culture was the underpinning force that fuelled these C&R incidents. Finally, I put forward the idea that the C&R incidents acted as an informal part of new recruits' training and formed part of their initiation during the transition period between POELT status and becoming a prison officer. The witnessing of racially motivated C&R demonstrated the hidden and sinister aspect of prison culture, that is, institutional racism. Since field training is the crucible in which new recruits learn the formal and informal practices of prisons, POs, SOs, and prison officers who engage in covert racism, whether consciously or unconsciously, end up perpetuating the ineffective and outmoded strategies for tackling subtle racism.

Racist incidents may cause black women to feel persecuted and feel isolated, and this may then quell their enthusiasm to improve race relations in prisons and fully assimilate into the organisational culture. This was demonstrated by the way participants gave detailed accounts of the C&R incidents and their negative feelings of helplessness and racial disadvantage, which in turn shaped the strategies, techniques, and, most importantly, the primitive defenses they applied during the incidents and thereafter.

The purpose of this chapter was to show the tension created between individual identity, organisational culture, and the boundaries that new recruits encounter when joining the Prison Service. I applied a psychodynamic framework to illustrate how social defenses act as a means to maintain the continuity of existing organisational identity in relation to institutional racism.

8 Lisa's Story: Oedipal Dynamics in the Carceral Space

You ridicule me without knowing,
Undermine my competence and skills.
To maintain your solidarity with your comrades,
your brotherhood and your friends.

Marcia Thomas

Main characters

Lisa: *British Indian Asian female Diversity Manager – participant*

Delilah: *white female – middle manager and Lisa's line manager*

Jezebel: *white female – senior manager*

This chapter focuses on Lisa, a 45-year-old Diversity Manager at HMP Nok. She is a non-operational manager G. Lisa defines herself as British Indian Asian. At the time of the first interview with her, Lisa had worked at HMP Nok for approximately four years. She was interviewed twice.

Lisa applied to work at HMP Nok when a Diversity Manager's position was advertised, believing it to be a senior management post. She had previously worked in public health and had worked with the Prison Service on joint ventures prior to her appointment. This suggests that she had a strong sense of citizenship and a desire to make a contribution to public life. It is unclear what qualified Lisa to do diversity work; it may be assumed that her personal qualities and past work experience may have qualified her for the position. Some of this past experience may have been in the sense of there being an assumption on the part of the appointing panel members that simply 'being' a black woman, equipped her for diversity work. Indeed, her gendered racialisation may have also been a factor. It is interesting that Lisa does not refer to her own identity characteristics (gender or race) or personal experience (gender/racial inequality) as having a bearing on her appointment to do diversity work, but instead considers these very identity characteristics to be a possible reason for the *difficulties* she encountered when carrying out her role.

When Lisa first worked at HMP Nok, she fulfilled the dual role of Diversity Manager and Race Equality Officer (REO), until she was allocated a SO as her REO. She described her induction to the prison as 'lacking' and sets out a number of difficult situations she encountered. One fundamental problem she faced was working in a white male-dominated organisation. The excerpt below shows that Lisa had thought about the dominating structure of her establishment before the interview. She states:

I mean and particularly finding yourself in this role, urm (4) I have to say I've been trying to fathom it for quite a while. It's not only white male process driven, it is very working class. (1) Urm and it is (2) uniformed [MT 'Huh'] it is uniformed it is urm. There must be a collective word for that, it's not the army and it does mean that urm you don't, you know. Gay men are not openly gay [MT 'Huh']. You know so urm, how does it affect me. I find it stifling in that in a real sense meaning of the word, it means you urm, (2) it's like a flower that doesn't come into blossom, you just stay stumped. [MT 'Urm'] So I don't think you're, I don't think you're allowed to be yourself, I don't think you're urm (3) allowed to shine to brightly and urm (3) it's, there's an element of [MT urm] having to endure it because of those things.

This excerpt highlights the various inequalities that exist not only in relation to gender and race, but also in relation to sexual orientation. Lisa talks about not being able to be herself or to flourish. Her statement concurs with my discussions in Chapter 6, whereby I postulated that the organisational culture restricted individuality and difference. Lisa further states:

I think urm, urm male in terms of urm (1) and processes urm. The broader issues of urm (6) for one of a better word the urm, urm touchy feely stuff [MT 'Huh huh'], urm is ignored, is not understood, it's not, it doesn't have urm, urm something of an equal play, it doesn't have a significant place urm. If it exists it's

excused, oh this is the touchy feely stuff [MT laughs] you know its urm
apologised for. [MT 'Yeah'] urm, and urm you have to.

In this extract Lisa is referring specifically to the patriarchal structure of prisons, by explaining that the 'touchy feely stuff' is ignored. I have interpreted this term to refer to the rehabilitation aspect of prison life, which is deemed to be an 'add on', because it is not given the same amount of importance as security. What is interesting is that Lisa does not explain who is actually doing the apologising for doing the 'touchy feely stuff'.

Lisa faced an additional dilemma because her role as Diversity Manager was new, requiring her to be creative when implementing new policies and developing positive race relations amongst different racial groups. Her colleagues were resistant to the changes introduced as a result of the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 (RRAA 2000), thus creating tension and a hostile environment.

An overview of the impact of the RRAA 2000 on the British Prison Service will provide the backdrop to Lisa's experience as Diversity Manager at HMP Nok. Her psychosocial experience will be examined in the context of institutional resistance to the changes introduced to the service, which involved a concerted effort to increase the number of black employees. During this period, the Prison Service introduced a number of measures to improve race relations in prisons. A robust racist incident complaints system, known as

the 'Racist Incident Reporting Form', was made available to all prisons. Monthly ethnic monitoring procedures were introduced, which provided an ethnic breakdown of the main activities and practices that impacted on prisoner life. The efforts to improve race relations in prisons may have been experienced as self-defeating, as those individuals who were already disadvantaged and marginalised because of their gender and race were further targeted by exclusion from the decision-making process of prisons as a result of their lack of seniority. The point I am making here is that Diversity Managers were appointed as manager Gs, the lowest managerial grade in prisons. This is an illustration of the dominant group's control to keep those marked out for such exclusion separate and unable to have the authority to make decisions. An example of this is shown in the excerpt below. Lisa is approached by a black female operational member of staff asking to change her shift pattern. Lisa seeks advice from Delilah, her line manager, and passes the information back to the member of staff, who is not happy either with the response she receives or the fact that Lisa had discussed her query with Delilah.

Another interesting low point that I find is there are so very few urm minority staff, you know ethnic minority staff. The few that there are have urm I feel like have alienated themselves from me. Because urm when they approach me for something I wasn't able to honour their requests. (2) And urm one was she had to change her shifts and you know the advice I got from Delilah was, well you've got to have two women, there's a decency issue here, so I said that. She didn't like that, the fact I'd discussed it with Delilah and that's it, she's just gone off me now.

As a member of a minority group, Lisa may have felt obliged to advocate on her colleague's behalf because of their shared racial and gender identity. Her colleague may have had specific expectations of Lisa with regard to race and gender loyalty. So Lisa may have been perceived as having a heightened awareness of racial and gender discrimination as a result of the intersection of race and gender and the difficulties encountered, for example, around childcare issues, which may have been a reason for the member of staff wanting to change her shift pattern. She may also have had expectations that Lisa as a black female Diversity Manager would be proactive in challenging gender and racial inequality and seek strategies for change which would enable her to change her shift pattern. Perhaps there was an implicit assumption that somehow, by virtue of Lisa's management position in the organisation, she might have had the authority to make these changes. This is noted by the fact that she approached Lisa who was not in her line management structure. Lisa was unable to meet her colleague's expectations, so she approached Delilah, who gave an explanation for the shift pattern. What is interesting here is that when Lisa fed back the information she was given, it was not well received.

In the above excerpt, Lisa further implies that her black colleagues isolate themselves from her. She states this is because she was unable to honour their requests. Quite possibly, Lisa may have felt isolated from her black colleagues for the very same reason. Hence there is an element of projective identification taking place between Lisa and her black colleagues.

From a racial analytical perspective, the above scenario illustrates white superiority because it does not appear that Lisa questions Delilah's explanation, nor does she seek alternative advice from another member of staff. The response received from Delilah may suggest that Lisa may have thought that the black female staff member wanted special consideration and for this reason she approached Lisa to advocate on her behalf. This is inferred because, according to Lisa, Delilah gives a general response without enquiring into the person's individual request.

The scenario also highlights the difference between black and white women. That is, white women are beneficiaries of white superiority because they have access to power through their affiliation with white men. Even though white women may encounter gender inequality within the workplace, the difference between black women and white women's experience is that black women actively experience racism almost on a daily basis (Davidson, 1992), and as a result of the intersection of race and gender, black women are ascribed very rigid boundaries, authority, and tasks within the workplace. This idea may be related to the way in which the social structure of the intersection of race and gender acts as a sharp division between prison managers, as shown by Lisa's lack of power to make suggestions or fully advocate on her black female colleague's behalf.

Another way of understanding how Lisa's role and lack of seniority caused anxiety and tension is by applying the concept of carceral space to show how she was subjected to exclusion and control 'through a structure of supervision or constraints, of discreet surveillance and insistent coercion' (Foucault, 1975, p. 299). Despite the popular perception that prison managers, for the most part, have autonomy, power, and an element of control by the nature of their position within the institution, this is not the case for all managers, as shown by Lisa's inability to advocate successfully on the black female officer's behalf.

In the discussions that follow, I will explain how external, social issues of racialisation and gendering, and the psychic emotional response to these issues, are condensed in Lisa's account of her relationship with her white colleagues. This is what I plan to analyse, to show the irreducible entanglement of the social and psychic, and how these play out organisationally within the backdrop of the implementation of the RRAA 2000. The impact of the legislation on individuals and groups may be thought of as producing anxiety, which in turn activated individual and group defenses (Obholzer, 1987). Emotions such as fear, anger and loss may have been experienced, in which 'polarising us versus them mentalities may emerge fuelled by psychological splitting and projection creating a black and white all good, all bad world view' (Godkin and Allcorn, 2010, p. 88).

From a psychodynamic angle, I am particularly interested in the relational dynamics which occur within the situations presented by Lisa, her past history, her engagement with the organisation, and its context. I intend to apply these ideas to the interpersonal issues that arise at work as a result of racial difference. Oedipal issues (triangulation) were a consistent theme in this participant's narrative, which highlighted feelings of exclusion, rivalry and fear. In this context, the Oedipal situation is conceptualised by relationships in an organisational space. This concept is a helpful analytical frame for this chapter because it will enable me to explore how the participant positions herself in relation to others. Furthermore, I apply Ronald Britton's (2004) notion of triangulation to explore how unconscious phantasies influence the inter-relationship between the participant and her colleagues.

8.1 Racism and the implementation of a race relations policy

An outline of the historical background of race relations in British prisons will be useful at this juncture, to demonstrate the negative legacy of institutional racism and the adverse impact this has on black women working in diversity roles when they attempt to improve race relations in prisons.

There are challenges to managing race relations in prisons because prison culture is made up of a series of paradoxes, as shown in the Prison Service Mission Statement and multiple tasks. On the one hand, prison structure inculcates uniformity and homogeneity, shown in the daily routine tasks and prison artefacts such as uniforms for prison officers,

etc. In addition, gender and racial differences are not tolerated and are treated with contempt, harshness and suspicion. The aim is to maintain control and security within prisons. On the other hand, the service publicly promotes diversity. This contradiction jeopardises the efforts of promoting positive race relations in prisons.

Among the indices of the lack of substantial progress in maintaining positive race relations are the continuing poor retention rates of black staff, the disparity in experience between black prisoners' and white prisoners' experiences of prison life (Edgar and Martin, 2004) and the number of claims made under the RRAA 2000. This could be a result of the unintended consequences of the introduction of anti-racist legislation and norms that have resulted in a heightened level of sensitivity towards racial difference, and the contradictions between wanting to improve race relations on the one hand, and maintaining the status quo with regards to racial inequality on the other hand. Here I am suggesting that there is a subtle, privileged position of white men and white women. The effect of this is that racial inequality remains in prisons (HMIP, 2005).

The Prison Service has attempted to increase the number of black staff. These attempts may have been based on theories that stem from a 'value in diversity' perspective (Cox, 1993), which argues that racial diversity means that a work group may experience increased information, enhanced problem-solving ability, constructive conflict and

debate, increased creativity, higher quality decisions and increased understanding of different ethnicities/cultures.

A closer look at the way this system operates in relation to the drive to increase the number of black staff and the introduction of prescriptive race relations procedures, makes clear the poor fit between aspirational plans and the realities of the practice. Scholars such as Hindpal Singh-Bhui (2006) have found instead that these are both ineffective and self-defeating systems in which individuals committed to improving race relations in prisons may be targeted for exclusion as a result of their role. Exclusion and control, therefore, are more than just functional mechanisms for responding to racial difference; they form part of the social structure of prisons, which not only new recruits are subjected to, but also staff who work in specialist roles such as diversity.

An increase in black staff has shown negative effects in social integration and working relationships between black and white staff (HMIP, 2005), and this shows that the Prison Service has not been successful in its effort to combat racism in prisons. Studies in race relations in prisons have continued to show racial inequality. The CRE (2003a) investigation reported that there were a number of failures in UK prisons with regard to the implementation of the RRAA 2000. Studies by Leonidas Cheliotis and Alison Liebling (2006), HMIP (2005) and Kimmitt Edgar and Carol Martin (2004) explored the perceptions of race relations amongst prisoners. They found that prisoners from minority

ethnic groups held more negative views about their treatment in prisons than their white counterparts.

8.2 The recruitment of a Diversity Manager

A quick outline of the recruitment of Diversity Managers will provide an overview of the development of this post. Following several findings of unlawful racial discrimination, in December 2003, the Prison Service committed itself to a five-year partnership for reform with the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE). The action plan set out a framework for change and contained a wide range of key actions aimed at addressing the specific failures and improving the monitoring and management of race equality in establishments. One significant action by the service was the appointment of a REO. This role was initially viewed as investigating racist incidents. However, managing race relations is more than investigating racist incidents. Therefore, some prisons opted to recruit Diversity Managers to lead on the implementation of race relations. A significant number of black women were appointed as Diversity Managers; in the region where Lisa worked, 7 out of 13 of the Diversity Managers were black females. This is an illustration of how the intersection of race and gender influences organisational psychodynamics. Black women were recruited as Diversity Managers, but unconsciously the organisation discriminated against these individuals because they were appointed at the lowest management grade with no authority or power to make any changes. This reproduces a social patterning in which black women occupy low level posts. Indeed, people in these roles more than likely encounter restrictions in what they might achieve. Therefore,

Diversity Managers are located on the margins of organisational power structures, possessing neither race nor gender privilege, or positional status (Drake-Clark, 2009). This highlights the unequal and conflictual relations between the dominant (white male) and minority (black female) group, which, in turn, subserves the interest of the white group that dominates prison management.

In light of this assertion, it is also worth considering the possibility that black female Diversity Managers may be greeted with hostility by other staff, because they may be the only black females in a management role in their prison. In this situation they are deemed to be a 'token' by their colleagues (Bell and Nkomo, 1999). This may result in hyper-visibility, where their actions are subjected to more scrutiny and criticism than those of their white male/female colleagues. The following account provides an example of how Lisa was scrutinised by her colleagues. I have used 'Nairobi' as a pseudonym.

You know, oh, you know she went to Nairobi to take back those resources, we don't know what she's doing when she's out in the community. Urm, and I remember this being discussed with the Governor and I said, well this is a resource I've been trying to get in it was called the *Journey to Multicultural Britain*. Urm and I'd been trying to get in, and you know urm, it got damaged in the process of getting it in, because nobody would take it... I don't know, but the gate didn't take, urm my package in and it did get damaged. And I, and I, took it back and we had a conversation about further work we can do, urm, they do

forum theatres, so I hadn't had a jolly (2) you know. Urm and I urm I'd, I, I heard also she discredited me to other people by saying oh I think she's struggling (3) you know and that, kind of stuff still sticks. Oh, how, how you in your role, I know you were struggling to begin with.

Lisa is recalling a time when Delilah, a white female senior manager, was questioning her work ethics prior to becoming her line manager. She is referring to an incident when she visited an organisation and borrowed their resources; she does not give details of the type of resources that were borrowed. Her colleagues were sceptical of her visit to the organisation, which is a subtle indication of the impact of the carceral because Lisa could not be observed or supervised outside the prison wall. The items were damaged; Lisa believes this could have been avoided if she had received assistance and cooperation from other prison staff. The damage to the items illustrates that a simple process, such as the delivery of an item to a prison, is not straightforward and requires the cooperation of individuals. In light of this example, it was unreasonable for the organisation to expect a Diversity Manager to end racism. To improve race relations at HMP Nok would have required a culture change, involving a collective approach by management and staff at various levels who were able to understand what would be best for the organisation, based on teamwork and an understanding of the dynamics of the workplace.

8.3 The psychodynamics of racial and gender triangulation

This section takes a psychodynamic approach to explore triangular relations linked to Oedipal situations in the context of prisons. A particularly interesting aspect of the recruitment of Diversity Managers is the notion of who are the outsiders? And who are the insiders? This set of issues is paralleled both by the relationship between the race relations context and the Oedipal situation, which is understood to address triangularity. Triangularity is one way of analysing the dynamics of interpersonal relationships in the context of prison culture.

Britton's theory of triangular space is taken from Freudian ideas of psychosexual development and Kleinian object relations theory. For the purpose of this chapter, I discuss Klein's interpretation of the Oedipus situation. Klein asserts that Oedipal dynamics continue throughout life. Her followers such as Britton (1989) have elaborated on Freud's formulations by suggesting that the Oedipal dilemma falls into two areas: pre-Oedipal, narcissistic, paranoid-schizoid functioning, and post-Oedipal, depressive position functioning, which is reached through the negotiation of the Oedipus complex (Carveth and Gold, 1999). (Further elaboration of the Kleinian approach to Oedipal dynamics in the developmental process of children is beyond the scope of this thesis.) Here, the key point of relevance is that vacillation between pre-Oedipal and post-Oedipal functioning is assumed by Kleinians to be a feature of human functioning throughout life (Steiner, 1993; Britton, 1992). Recorded as triangular space by such writers, it offers a lens for analysing the interpersonal relationship in an organisational context.

An interpersonal relationship may develop between individuals working together.

Interactions within the workplace tend to be based on triangular relationships. These interpersonal relationships may be complex; therefore transparency and honesty play pivotal roles in maintaining positive interpersonal relationships. This leads me to consider the concept of triangular space. A psychodynamic perspective of interpersonal relationships proposes that the triad relationship is a triangle involving the infant, mother and father. This early relationship and the Oedipal dynamics that occur within it may be used to understand the interpersonal relationships that occur between adults in the workplace. Working through the Oedipal situation enables individuals to form positive interpersonal relationships and avoid conflict in the triangular relationship. A relationship involving three people tends to have an element of something missing, which is difficult to comprehend except through extreme emotional stress that triangles generate.

Drawing on the Oedipal situation concept, Robert Waska (2000) implies there is a realisation that the dyad relationship between the infant and mother is actually a triad relationship that includes self, mother and father (Robbins, 2006). What is particularly relevant here is that in any triangle there are two people who are insiders and one person who is an outsider. This position may lead to feelings of exclusion and isolation because the individuals concerned may not understand the position they occupy in the triangle, and this thus creates more tension.

8.4 Triangular space

Britton extended Klein's work when he developed the concept of 'triangular space', which he defines as:

a space bounded by the three persons of the Oedipal situation and all their potential relationships (1993, p. 84).

Britton developed this concept in relation to the psychoanalytic encounter. A triangular space as a relational space and a space in the mind can only be formed when the infant begins to cope with the realisation that a third person exists; that this third person has a relationship with the mother; and is the mother's partner. The infant needs to allow the parents to come together internally for a link between the internal world and external world to be made. I am here referring to the internalisation of the parental relationship in the child's mind. Britton explains:

The acknowledgement by the child of the parents' relationship with each other unites his psychic world, limiting it to one world shared with his two parents in which different object relationships can exist (1989, p. 84).

At this point the infant has successfully negotiated the Oedipal situation. This is where the Oedipal situation overlaps with the depressive position outlined by Klein (1940).

Britton suggests that the Oedipus complex and depressive position are:

inextricably intertwined in such a way that one cannot be resolved without the other; we resolve the Oedipus complex by working through the depressive position and the depressive position by working through the Oedipus complex (1989, p. 35).

The above quotation refers to the development of secure relations with good internal objects, which symbolises the development of 'a capacity for symbol formation and rational thought' (Britton, 1992, p. 37). This suggests that there is a realisation that the object continues away from the infant, thus forming relationships with other objects.

This idea is linked to the relationship between employees and their superiors, that is, that relationships are influenced by unconscious phantasies relating to the role and space of the individuals involved, and when three people are involved this may prevent colleagues from working together effectively. Collaborative working practices occur when individuals develop the capacity to accept their own position and partiality within the work relationship, thus occupying a triangular space.

This argument suggests that as adults we are constantly working through the Oedipus situation because the triangular relationship is present throughout life (Britton, 1992). The negotiations that take place during infancy set the foundations for the way we develop relationships and respond to rejection (Rusbridger, 2004) in the workplace. This

enables us to struggle with, and think about, confusing and disturbing situations.

However, in times of anxiety and stress, we unconsciously resort to the false security of pre-Oedipal functioning. I integrate this conception of triangular space and the emotional complexities with both intersectionality theory and an organisational psychodynamic perspective to analyse Lisa's work experience at HMP Nok.

8.5 HMP Nok

A brief overview of HMP Nok's staff demographics and management structure will be useful at this point to set the scene for Lisa's work environment. HMP Nok is a young offender institution (YOI) in the north of England. In 2010, 2.5 per cent of staff were recorded as black and minority ethnicity (BME). From these figures it is clear that the general demographic profile of prison staff was white. Unfortunately, the data available at the time does not allow for a detailed breakdown of specific ethnic group or breakdown by gender and ethnicity. What is disconcerting, however, is that Lisa was the only black manager at HMP Nok. Perhaps the lack of meaningful engagement on the part of white staff to embrace race relations was because there were no other black managers to drive the agenda. Another reason for the lack of engagement might be a result of fear and general resistance towards the RRAA 2000, to the extent that a gap between espoused race relations policy and race relations in practice occurred.

Although Lisa does not go into detail about the hierarchy arrangements at HMP Nok, an overview of the management structure will be outlined to show how the hierarchy of staff

may produce tension and anxiety. My description is based on a combination of Lisa's reference to the staff hierarchy and my general knowledge of British prisons' management structure.

The Governor has ultimate control of the prison; this includes overall responsibility for the staff who work there and the prisoners. The Governor delegates strategic responsibility and operational responsibility to a team of senior managers, referred to as the Senior Management Team (SMT). The SMT comprise grade Es and above. Lisa also sat on the SMT, even though she was a manager G. Each department is allocated a Head of Department and a deputy grade F. The diversity and equality function was located outside the hierarchy structure at HMP Nok because Lisa was initially line-managed by the Governor. She explains:

Yeah, so urm, urm yes and it was quite an isolated role and I've felt like I'd walked into urm, some political game playing (2) urm really urm and I don't really feel. Initially I was line-managed by the Governor, but he wasn't able, which was fine. This is where the political game playing comes in. Urm he wasn't able to give me the day-to-day support (2) and urm the like and then I got a temporary SO urm to work as the REO, urm and this is where the political game playing came in, because they wanted control of the REO and they could get that through me. And so, urm and in order to get it the REO would be assigned to the person who was line-managing me, not me line-managing the REO. [MT 'Okay'].

So in various subtle ways, what was done was um and, and it is a plan, it's a plan it's a strategy that is used is deployed um, and the strategy was (3) how to describe it. They um discredited you, (1) subtly. [MT 'Huh'] Very, very subtly.

This management arrangement was precarious because it sat outside the hierarchy structure. Lisa mentions at the beginning of the extract that she felt isolated, perhaps because she was not part of a team and was completing both her designated role as Diversity Manager and the REO duties. She was then incorporated within the Offender Management Unit with a manager F line-managing her and overseeing her work. The change in Lisa's line management produced tension because she lost her autonomy. Although Lisa states in the above excerpt she was 'fine' with the changes, she contradicts this by referring to a 'political game', which suggests that she believes there were ulterior motives behind the changes. On the surface this was a 'simple' and very common amendment to the institutional structure and reporting lines. But the psychodynamics of organisations tells us change such as this can be invested with much emotional charge, which impacts and gets played out in the micro-social world of interpersonal relationships.

In the above extract Lisa stated she was allocated a SO to fulfil the REO duties. This occurred around the same time her line management structure changed. She lost full control of her newly appointed REO because he was incorporated into the department. The decision to take over the line management responsibilities of Lisa's REO and to

oversee her work was more than likely rooted in stereotypes that black people are not as competent as white people to manage their own staff. This view stems from racial and gender stereotypes of black women (Bell and Nkomo, 1992). From a psychodynamic angle, this arrangement in phantasy was perceived as an attack that needed to be defended. This explains Lisa's quest for a mentor. She approached a colleague to mentor her, but was turned down. Juanita Johnson-Bailey and Ronald Cervero (2004) assert that usually people mentor others from their own racial and ethnic group. This makes it difficult for black women to find mentors, and therefore as a group they miss out on the professional skills that may be gained from the mentoring relationship. The lack of mentorship may cause feelings of loneliness and isolation. Unconsciously this may be experienced as persecution and anxiety. Lisa says:

Urm, I did ask for a mentor, urm and I you know, I, I felt and I, I said that my induction was lacking. And I approached somebody to be a mentor and urm, she declined and I approached her because I could see she was a key strategic, urm individual, but she declined. Urm referred me to somebody else, who was happy to do it, but he was pretty ineffective in the role, you know he didn't really understand the whole mentoring thing.

From the extract above, there is a sense of the beginning of an intensive relationship on Lisa's part in relation to her two white female colleagues, Delilah and Jezebel. From Lisa's account it appears that her relationship with these two colleagues was based on

conflictual situations, as shown when Delilah became her line manager. Jezebel was Delilah's line manager and head of the department. This situation was antagonistic and ominous; this might be a reason why Lisa wanted someone to protect her. In the extract below she talks about the benefits of Jezebel's support, referring to her not questioning her timekeeping and trusting her. She explains:

Urm (2) once you get Jezebel's support its worth you know a lot. She never questioned my time keeping, or anything, that trust urm.

The circumstances Lisa found herself in can be viewed through an Oedipal lens; during the Oedipus conflict the child is overwhelmed by dual, incompatible feelings: love and the wish to protect the parent and self, and fear and the wish to destroy the parent.

Lisa perceives and experiences her superiors as authority figures and the dynamic occurs in a three. Lisa realises she is in competition with Delilah for Jezebel's support, which means protection and possible status to her. Lisa says:

Like I said this Jezebel, you know Delilah was her prodigy and urm you know she, they had strategies for doing all sort of things and they're all unspoken and they're all about you could say milking the situation and it would be you know, if you're a PO act like you're a Governor, so go sit with them for lunch and I've

heard all this other stuff, it's like arse licking or whatever they call it, or creaming up to.

According to Lisa, Jezebel was supporting Delilah's career development by giving her advice on how to be recognised by her superiors. Lisa may have wanted this advice too, but because she was not part of the group she was unable to receive it. Therefore, the authority figures received projections of persecution (Kets de Vries, 2004). The authority figures triggered unconscious conflicts which manifested themselves by projections of anger, rivalry, hostility and jealousy. Through primitive defenses, Lisa and her two white female superiors re-enacted their unresolved conflicts. Quite possibly deep-rooted and irrational motives that stemmed from childhood influenced their interpersonal relationship. These motives caused Lisa to become very suspicious of Delilah's motivation for wanting to line-manage her, as we can see when she refers to a strategy in the extract below.

This strategy, I mean I know it was in place, she's urm (1) she's urm referred to (1) referred to the approach and strategy not in relation to me, but in relation to you know oh, I know what to do I'll just drop in casually, you know I'll just drop it in casually as we're talking, you know so there's a process urm.

In the above extract Lisa is sharing elements of a conversation she had with Jezebel. Here, she implies the 'strategy' is not in relation to her, but yet in other accounts she provides examples of how the strategy was used against her, for example when she talks about her meeting with the Deputy Governor later in this chapter. This suggests that the 'strategy' is something negative, that there are multiple strategies, and that it may possibly be a well- thought-out action/process used by her white senior managers.

Status dynamics were also evident in relation to Jezebel and Delilah's seniority and operational status. Lisa stated she initially thought her position was a senior role, so she may have felt even more disappointed, or even belittled, when Delilah became her line manager, creating two additional management layers between her and the Governor. The extract below provides an example of this.

I did actually think it was a senior post I was in, but it turned out it was a middle management post and I did feel like I would have a team of people and I realised it was all me.

For Lisa these dynamics are overlaid by racial difference. This is emphasised by the comment below when she reflects on the way she was treated by her colleagues.

Now to what extent these are experiences to you know being a black woman or an Asian woman or anybody who is distrusting, I don't know.

These are pertinent points because when Lisa suggests that her treatment may be a result of her being a black woman, this infers there is an element of white superiority reflected in the disadvantage she has encountered. I have interpreted this comment as making reference to racialised oppression (Feagin and McKinney, 2003), as a result of white privilege. Lisa's reference to her ethnicity is noted when she implies her treatment might be because she is an 'Asian woman'. I am not sure if Lisa is hinting at the stereotypes ascribed to Asian women as 'docile and passive', or to the notion of 'suspect community'. 'Suspect community' is a term applied by Mary Hickman et al. (2011) to describe the hypersensitivity and suspicion directed towards Muslim and Irish people. The latter comment with regards to trust may be related to the organisational culture, and follows on from the comment in relation to suspect community that derives from a lack of trust of a group of people based solely on their ethnic origin. What is also interesting in Lisa's questioning of the reason for her treatment is that her gender is consistent in the two first points, which infers that there is a connection, an overlap between her race/ethnicity and gender, indicating the importance of applying an intersectional framework to examine her work experience.

Following on from the above discussion, it is clear that race plays a significant part in Lisa's encounter with her white female superiors because Delilah and Jezebel are both

white women. Although they all share the same gender, Lisa, unlike her white female colleagues, does not possess positional status. It has been argued that white women are privileged because of their race (hooks, 1981). It could be suggested that white women are privileged by being located in a special place for white women only (Frost, 1980). This privileged position is invisible to the recipient. Patricia Hill Collins (2000) has suggested that white women have a tendency to be complicit with white privilege and white men. Within the organisational dynamics operating at HMP Nok, Lisa was not privy to the arrangements of responsibility for her REO, which is an example of the way black women encounter workplace isolation and their views are treated as unimportant.

What is emerging from this discussion is an illustration of the psychic and interpersonal dynamics of gendered racialisation; that is, for black women gender and race are simultaneous processes of identity that impact on their experience of organisational psychodynamics. I have attempted to identify and untangle the differential impact of everyday practice at HMP Nok, thus illustrating how race and other forms of difference, such as status, are given meaning, psychically as well as socially, through organisational processes.

8.6 Lisa's perception of her white female colleagues

The interpersonal dynamics between Lisa and her two white female colleagues was not restricted to resentment, disappointment and jealousy; in fact, more complex mental mechanisms involving idealisation and desire emerged. Idealising is another way of

coping with feelings of helplessness and insecurity. We idealise people important to us, beginning with our first caretakers, assigning powerful imagery to them. Through this idealising process we hope to overcome our sense of helplessness and insecurity and acquire some of the power of the person admired.

There was something of this at play in Lisa's narrative, which gave the impression that she idealised Jezebel and desired the skills and status she acquired. Lisa viewed Jezebel as omnipotent; this might be because of her position as a senior manager, or her style of working.

Earlier I explained that Lisa encountered resistance from her colleagues when trying to promote race relations. This might explain the reason why she wanted Jezebel to be her mentor and perhaps as protector from a hostile working environment. I explained in Chapter 6 how prison culture exhibits mistrust, suspicion and violence among staff and prisoners, which creates a hostile environment, filled with anxiety and fear that needs to be defended against by the initiation of defense mechanisms. I also pointed out that prisons are unique environments because hostility is not just a phantasy but a reality, a result of working with some of the most dangerous, violent, vulnerable, and mentally ill people in society. I also highlighted the contradictions in the social role of prisons and what prisons actually do. In addition, I described how prison culture is masculine and racialised, therefore, gender and racial inequalities impact on the dynamics of the organisation. Working in such an environment may produce feelings of vulnerability that

trigger unconscious fear and anxiety, creating a bridge between the external reality and the internal world in which reality becomes blurred. Nicola Caramia (2006) illustrates this point when she asserts that people unconsciously search for a good enough mother in the workplace who will nurture them and ensure their survival in a hostile and dangerously perceived external reality. She further postulates that the workplace unconsciously evokes infantile emotional injuries and feelings of love, and that these emotions are acted out towards and against established managers. Caramia (2006) offers the concept of an Oedipal illusionary situation to describe what occurs between individuals and their seniors, and applies Britton's (1998) application of the term, which refers to a defensive structure formed to protect the infant from fear of disintegration and to maintain the illusion of an exclusive dyad relationship with each parent, while hating the other. The Oedipal illusion is more subtle in the workplace; it affects the working relationship in pervasive and undermining ways in which the idealised individual is viewed as gratifying, and anything other than a constant flow of good feelings is viewed as being extremely hostile and rejecting of the person.

A sense of this may be obtained by the way Lisa viewed her establishment as a place that was hostile. Here I am cognisant of the considerable overlap between the various factors that may create a hostile environment. For example, the organisational culture, or Lisa's role as Diversity Manager, or the possible resistance she may have encountered when she was implementing new practices to promote race relations. The hostility she experienced may have been a result of the carceral space and the nature of the working environment, the regulatory regimes, bureaucracy, systems within prisons, or Oedipal conflicts with

feelings of exclusion and rivalry. These factors may have caused her to feel isolated and vulnerable. Lisa uses these terms when describing a specific period in her work experience shown below. She initiates defense mechanisms to deal with the anxieties of working in a hostile environment and functioning in an inferiority–superiority dynamic that blurs racial interactions, creates tension and fuels mistrust.

In the following account, Lisa refers to a strategy that she believes her superiors had concocted against her. She talks about attending a meeting at the request of the Deputy Governor, but not knowing the purpose of the meeting.

Before I got, and, and this was quite nasty, before I got the urm line management of the REO, urm... a private conversation with the Dep [Deputy Governor]. The Dep called me in for a conversation which I felt very, very nervous about, and urm and I also realised the urm mentor would be somebody that fed back [MT 'Oh']. (2) You know I mean and there's a lot of dirty trickery I find in the prison as a service like that. Anyway, I felt uncomfortable with the mentor, with the Dep and I wasn't clear of his purpose and he was taking notes and at no time did he share those notes with me, or concluded, or summarised what he understood on any particular issues, and then urm urm he wrote me a letter and it was like unbelievable the amount he twisted what I'd said, and urm I just thought, I didn't really know what this was about, whether it was to try and get rid of me and try to get somebody that was more (1) their own kind, (2) or urm, whatever, I don't

know. So urm, but I did feel really, and this was, this, this was a significant low point I you know I really did feel quite shit about it, and I felt urm, quite threatened and I felt very vulnerable, and urm, (1) but anyway I took urm the letter and I used personal friends' support and didn't really feel like I'd got urm, urm a great deal of support (1) from the management at all I don't feel I was taken in, and nurtured and supported urm.

There are a lot of examples of Lisa's anxiety directed towards the Deputy Governor. Her anxiety towards her meeting with the Deputy Governor and her suspicion is evident in her confusion about his motives for arranging the meeting with her. In her account she expresses her fear of being punished, shown in her comment that she thought the meeting was about 'getting rid' of her. Perhaps her fear prevented her from asking the Deputy Governor to explain the purpose of the meeting, or maybe she was worried about offending the authority figure, which would have deepened her feelings of being threatened, vulnerable, and not being nurtured. This made it difficult for her to find a safe way to address the source of her anxiety. There is a sense of Lisa feeling as though she does not belong and also feeling unappreciated by the way the meeting progresses. She is frustrated and quite possibly tired of being judged and having to defend herself against being labelled as not good enough; this is evident by the comment 'it was to try and get rid of me'.

Lisa's comment about her mentor indicates that she felt she was not receiving adequate support. This might explain why she relies on a colleague outside of her department for support. In the following extract, Lisa discusses Delilah's response to her close relationship with a colleague from another department.

However, urm what did help me enormously, urm was I got on very well with a probation officer and we worked together, I mean, and she is urm a friend, thoroughly trusted and she since left. But to quote one of the other ways that you know. There was urm, tried to be urm dismantled (1) was urm my line manager [Delilah] had gone to the probation, senior probation officer who line-managed Zaina my friend and said was he aware of how much time Zaina was spending with me (3) and urm, you know he sits in an office she just sits out there, which it's in a office, they have a big open plan space. And urm, he said yes he was, I mean he could see, you, you know so it's, it's just one of the discredit, you know, I know I wasn't just paranoid (1) and I know because she told me this is a strategy she uses not in reference to me and I've got two very clear examples of the way she did it. And urm, the urm, conversation with the Dep I then used friends to urm break it down and responded back, urm you know, by saying, it was a long conversation, however, it appears that you know a lot of what was, I'd like to clarify a lot of what I'd said. So I wrote back a smarter reply [MT 'Huh'] basically, bullet by bullet. In this I was referring to historically to, I this de, de, de, de. And I never heard anything back and he'd copied the Governor into the letter (2) cc into the Governor. I didn't cc to the Governor and I decided I wasn't going

to (1) I wasn't going to play the game really, urm. But I did feel very, very threatened [MT 'Huh'] and I didn't feel comfortable urm, in their company.

Lisa's initial apprehension and fears about the threat of being targeted were realised when Delilah approached Zaina's line manager to discuss the amount of time she spent with her. Delilah's action creates further anxiety because Lisa does not understand her motives, especially since Delilah had not discussed her concerns with Lisa directly. This creates feelings of being watched and set up, which might explain why Lisa felt Delilah was conspiring against her.

Delilah's actions are an indication of racial pairing, which provides safety among racial group members. I am suggesting that Delilah felt more comfortable speaking with her peer who was also white, rather than Lisa. Therefore, it might be suggested that the incident is entwined with racialised and genderised dynamics, perpetuating racial isolation and entrenched separation of racial groups. The incident also fuelled Lisa's suspicion about Delilah's motivation, which links to the earlier discussion in which Lisa insinuated that her superiors had a 'strategy' that they deployed to discredit others. This incident further highlights how the organisational culture of mistrust and suspicion is infectious; that is, that Lisa was suspicious of Delilah and Delilah suspicious of Lisa.

Lisa's reluctance to raise her concerns with the Deputy Governor and Delilah may have inadvertently created a situation that she was trying to avoid. She may have intensified her feelings of isolation and persecution by not discussing her concerns with the individuals involved.

Lisa's role as Diversity Manager, which involved completing investigations into racist incidents, may have had some bearing on the way she was feeling during the situations discussed above and her decision not to express her feelings. Moreover, Lisa's marginalised status, her role as Diversity Manager, and the issues around race relations in general in the prison quite possibly created a sense of helplessness. She may have feared retaliation from her authority figures if she had raised concerns about her treatment.

This may explain Lisa's desire to be nurtured. There is a propensity to cling to an internalised good object, which is idealised and which helps to avoid the anxiety produced by the negative feelings of working in a hostile environment. When functioning in this state and ignoring the reality of the situation, this allows people's past (unrealistic) hopes, fears and phantasies to govern their interactions with their colleagues. Lisa may have felt that if Jezebel had mentored her she would have been protected and saved from the negative experiences she encountered. This view is illustrated by the next two comments:

once you get Jezebel's support it's worth you know a lot.

urm knowing if I'd got her support, I would be all right, knowing if I didn't (2) I would be in the soup.

Lisa's desire for Jezebel's support and protection is clearly expressed here. She describes the consequences of not having Jezebel's support. I have interpreted her reference to being 'in the soup' as an indication of a tormenting experience. Securing a protective parental figure is just out of reach and unavailable as a source of nurture and containment. Therefore her relationship with Jezebel was a mixture of conflicting emotions activated by her initial rejection. The account illustrates the primitive intensities that result in defenses such as splitting and projection.

8.7 The triangular relationship

I will now apply Britton's (1989) notion of 'triangular space' to examine what happens psychosocially between Lisa and her two white colleagues as she grapples with her position within the organisation.

This process of developing a triangular space within the workplace may be related to the infant's development, that is, the infant must discover and accept the Oedipal triangle for mental development to occur. The acknowledgement that two can be together; that there

is a third who looks on; and that the two are seen by the third person, may cause anxiety or reassurance. When this occurs, the infant has successfully negotiated the Oedipal situation and the adult in the workplace may develop a capacity for thinking. However, this is a process which, in the organisational context, plays out as a transition between wanting and expecting to be taken care of, in the sense of being guided and protected by senior managers. My intention here is to expand the idea by delving deeper into this triangular relationship by combining intersectional ways of thinking in relation to the way gender and race positions black women as insiders/outside, together with Britton's notion of triangular space. As shown earlier, Lisa experienced the duality of operating as an 'outsider within', in which she simultaneously operated from the margins as well as the centre. Her positionality was a result of her visibility/invisibility as a black female manager.

Lisa's visibility was evident by the fact that she sat on the SMT board and was responsible for the implementation of the diversity agenda as well as race relations. This made her an insider. However, as a black woman working in a predominantly white male organisation, she was also an outsider. The intersection of race and gender located her in between two groups of unequal power – white/black, men/women – and her position as a Diversity Manager created additional unequal power in relation to role and seniority. Lisa had already alluded to her disappointment with regard to her status within the organisation. She also stated that colleagues were wary of her because of her role, as shown in the account below:

Well like I said you know Zaina was very positive she was very supportive, enjoyed urm over time people got, got use to the fact that I wasn't gonna you know (1) urm I wasn't gonna get them into trouble, you know somebody said to me you know well you know it's self-preservation, we don't say anything to you because you could just. [MT laughs] So they realise urm it's a friendly place urm.

This illustrates her precarious position of being an 'outsider within'. It also shows how suspicion and mistrust is rife and is a prominent aspect of the organisation's culture. Furthermore, her role did not preclude her from encountering suspicion from her colleagues and it also highlights the power relations.

Lisa commented about the power inequalities she faced when trying to appoint a REO. The competition for competent staff and recognition of roles may lead to sibling rivalry. During periods of vulnerability and transition, individuals lose touch with the depressive position and regress into a primitive world of part-object relations. They begin to communicate with the help of projection, splitting and projective identification. In the following extract Lisa describes a number of conversations she had with Jezebel regarding her dual duties as Diversity Manager and REO, the recruitment of a REO, and the acknowledgment that the REO vacancy was being recognised in the same way as the resettlement position that was advertised at the same time.

You know, and you know subtle things were said to me. Urm the woman I'd asked to mentor me you know has a reputation for being a bully and urm, I remember purposely making an approach to ask her something and saying something like (2). I can't remember if it was about the nature of, of, of investigations because like I said I was trying to do, I was trying to do both roles and I said well urm, she said well you know it should only take urm a limited time. I can't remember what she said whether it was a couple of days, or a day or a couple of hours. I said oh, it takes me anything up to four days. (1) To which she replied you know, urm there was something seriously wrong. (1) urm, and I said there are all sorts of factors and urm, you know not least of all other people's availability and I thought four days was good, but I wasn't gonna tell her that, but. So urm, (1) urm, and I remember when urm the REO was put in temporarily, it was then advertised and urm (1) I remember saying things, something like, I think there was a post in resettlement advertised as well and I said, oh at least we're now competing from the same pool of SOs [MT 'Yeah'] and I was told very subtle urm by this woman urm, well no if you think about it (1) that's two SOs for Delilah. So I knew the games that were being played. You know. Urm, so that was a particular low.

In this extract there is a conversation recounted between Jezebel and Lisa. At the beginning of the extract the conversation is focused around Lisa's work and the time it takes her to complete investigations into allegations of racist incidents. Lisa and Jezebel have a difference of opinion about the length of time it takes to complete investigations.

Lisa does not state her opinion. This might be interpreted as another way in which she feels disempowered to put forward her view because she fears reprisals. This may exacerbate feelings of suspicion and negative feelings, emphasised by the statement 'so that was a particular low' in relation to the organisation. Lisa describes how 'you know subtle things were said to me' by Jezebel, and referred to 'the games that were being played'. This latter comment may be read in two ways. It might be directed towards Lisa, albeit Lisa does not state this, but an inference might be made that Lisa felt Jezebel and Delilah were conspiring against her. This is shown towards the end of the extract when Lisa states: 'and I said, oh at least we're now competing from the same pool of SOs [MT 'Yeah'] and I was told very subtle urm by this woman urm, well no if you think about it (1) that's two SOs for Delilah.' This is a sly reminder to Lisa of her lack of autonomy and authority. And there are also racial undertones, highlighting racial pairing and the dyad fusion that exists between Delilah and Jezebel. A dyad relationship exists between Jezebel and Delilah that is paraded in front of Lisa as shown in the above extract. This dyad relationship may have begun before Lisa started working at HMP Nok, or it might have been a result of Jezebel working closely with Delilah, a result of the organisational hierarchy. Lisa described Delilah as Jezebel's prodigy, an indication of the close relationship and the investment Jezebel was making in Delilah as imagined by Lisa. Jezebel and Delilah's close working relationship may have caused Lisa to experience negative feelings. In Lisa's unconscious phantasy she may have viewed Delilah and Jezebel's relationship as collusion against her. This is an illustration of a triangular relationship and sets the scene for heightened anxiety as well as complex conscious and unconscious dynamics between Lisa and her superiors.

The comment Lisa made with reference to 'game playing' may be related to the establishment's commitment to race relations, a point discussed earlier in this chapter. I outlined the resistance Lisa encountered from colleagues and put forward a number of ways Lisa felt disempowered in her role.

The above two points are now expanded to include racial difference to explore how this may have a significant impact on the relationship dynamics between the three individuals. As mentioned earlier, in social formations that have 'race' as a key structuring principle, racial dynamics always exist and influence the inter-relationships between individuals. I described earlier how racial stereotypes may lead to bias against black women. This affects the interaction between individuals. When these perceptions and beliefs are ignored, the individual who encounters this unfavourable treatment feels unheard and ignored. This was evident in Lisa's situation because she felt excluded and isolated from Delilah and Jezebel's group, thus creating a triangle of exclusion that provoked different paranoid-schizoid feelings such as splitting and idealisation. In addition, these feelings were blurred by racial constellations, which may have fuelled the tension and intensified the anxiety and persecutory feelings as a result of racial isolation. I have interpreted the terms 'strategy' and 'political game playing', terms Lisa referred to in previous extracts, as metaphors for exclusion, feelings of powerlessness, and secrecy. Lisa does not explain what these terms mean; this is an indication of what is known, but cannot be spoken about— the unconscious organisational dynamics. Here I am referring to

the way in which the organisation inculcates infantile coping strategies for dealing with overwhelming ambivalent feelings in response to the different tasks and social and environmental demands of the institution that may produce tension and anxiety.

As the interview progressed I sensed that Lisa was becoming increasingly unhappy with her working arrangements and her resentment towards Delilah and Jezebel's relationship. Negative emotional feelings were produced such as jealousy and envy, which were experienced as an attack on the couple, aimed at destroying the unit because Lisa perceived that Delilah was responsible for the withdrawal of Jezebel's attention. This rivalry for Jezebel's affection fits the Oedipal situation which Klein (1946) describes when the infant perceives the father as a rival for the mother's breast.

I am painting a picture of Lisa's position in the triangle. She is the excluded one, located outside the triangle. Britton (1992) asserts that a triangle involves two relating plus one observing, thus potentially feeling excluded. The feeling of exclusion is experienced as a persecuting attack. Lisa tries to avoid the persecutory feeling of being looked on, and the third person looking on, by trying to draw closer to Jezebel. Within the organisational dynamics, an allegiance to Jezebel, who is a senior manager, is seen as potentially bringing influence and power, illustrated by the extract below:

The other one who was urm, urm she urm... (3) She's with the POA [Prison Officers' Association], equal opps for the POA and urm [Lisa sighs] I mean, I've worked with loads of useless people and urm not getting the proper management support always... Jezebel when she lined- managed she was you know thorough, she was good...

The above extract provides an indication of Lisa's belief that a link or bond with Jezebel will create generative power, and therefore she takes on an idealistic view of Jezebel and Delilah's dyad relationship. This is an indication of her being in a paranoid-schizoid position.

I sensed a shift in Lisa's narrative when she was in a paranoid-schizoid mode; she spoke quickly and anxiously, as if she was sharing her interpretation of Delilah and Jezebel's conspiracy. At other times Lisa spoke as if she felt that she was, or had acquired a capacity to be, ruthless as she felt they were. This is shown by her feelings about organising Jezebel's leaving do, as shown in the following extract.

Yeah there is one thing, there is just one final thing, the strategy of urm, urm, urm keeping your friends close and your enemies closer, they recently retired these two and at the end of it urm, you know I became the one who organised the do, and der de der, and this that and at the end of it I felt so torn and I felt so like I'd

urm compromised myself so much it would, it felt on a par with siding with the bullies (2). I felt so compromised and urm and trashed and stirred in my head, head mashed, I mean quite seriously so, I spent a whole weekend trying to process it. At the end of it to think that you know it felt like. It's also a dangerous strategy [MT 'Urm'] in that sense that you become them, or not that you become them, you become at worse you become them at best you're siding with them. [MT 'Urm'] And that, that tantamount to siding with the bullies, it's a bit like, for me and I'm grateful, and I'm pleased a lot of the you know individuals that caused me shit have gone [MT 'Yeah'] including those that were left and I needed to work close with. You know which opens it all up, it is, it is quite a ruthless place and quite a ruthless place. The other thing I wanted to say you know the environment and the way it is, it is a dog eat dog, back stabbing. And one of the ways, one of the key things and it is, it is personally quite damaging if you...

This is a powerful extract for two reasons. First it speaks to the violent, hostile world of the prison as an organisation, and second it also speaks of Lisa's struggle in terms of her own morality and values. That is, that Lisa may have believed Delilah to have no moral compass as a result of the way she had treated her. Lisa may have also felt she was losing her own moral compass.

The triangular relationship as formed is perceived to be dangerous and is superseded by a pain inside Lisa expressed in her comment 'head mashed', when she describes her

difficult weekend. This is an illustration of her being in the depressive position in which there is a need to repair the damage object (Hinshelwood, 1994). The formation of a triangular space occurred when Lisa acknowledged the triangular relationship, by stopping and thinking for a moment towards the end of the interview.

In conclusion, this chapter focused on the issues of an Oedipal situation, that is, the tension that occurs in a triangular relationship and the need for the individuals concerned to manage each other within the triangular relationship. To do this, I applied Britton's notion of triangularity and the shifting position of being in/out of a dyad; being an observer of this; then being outside it; and understanding that 'you' as subject may be observed when in the dyad, and with all the anxieties and rivalries this produces. Moreover, I examined how Lisa's racial difference and her role as Diversity Manager affected the relational dynamics with her colleagues. My discussions offered a detailed consideration of the tensions and conflict that were produced as a result of entrenched racial inequality at HMP Nok, resistance towards improving race relations, and the interpersonal process and organisational dynamics that has been a constant theme throughout this thesis. Applying an organisational psychodynamic framework, I aimed to illustrate how racialised and gendered identity is made meaningful within the context of forming new relationships. That is, my analysis took into account specific ways in which the triangular relationship occurred in the context with/through processes of racialisation and gendering at HMP Nok. Furthermore, I have illustrated how Lisa endeavoured to avoid the perpetuation of marginalisation as a result of her gendered racialisation by seeking to forge a relationship with one particular white female colleague. I did this by

analysing how Oedipal dynamics, understood through Britton's notion of the triangular relationship, emerged in Lisa's relationship with her two white female colleagues. That is, triangular conflicts were evoked when Lisa's line management structure changed.

These conflicts were acted out both towards and against Delilah and Jezebel, who represented authority figures. I have also shown how Lisa worked through these tensions, which enabled her to accept that other object relationships may exist, thus developing an awareness of a triangular space.

9 The Impact of Gendered Racialisation on Organisational Psychodynamics

Humiliated and disgraced,
 This is how you make me feel,
 Time and time again,
 When you take my opportunities away.

Marcia Thomas

Main characters

Lorna White, *black Caribbean female senior manager – participant*

Peter, *white male – Lorna White and department's manager*

Eve, *white female – senior manager*

Joseph, *white male – NOMS Chief Executive Officer*

This chapter focuses on Lorna White, a black Caribbean female senior manager at Songhai Empire where she worked for eight years. She was interviewed twice. I follow the previous chapter's approach by paying attention to one participant's story because it adds strength to my analysis of how gender and racial, and social and psychic manifestations are played out in the British Prison Service, while continuing with the theme of examining how the intersection of race and gender in the context of the

workplace creates unique relational dynamics. It is my intention to emphasise detailed contextual analysis of an event involving this participant, and explore its impact. I draw on Wilfred Bion's (1961) work on group mentality to examine the tension that occurs between Lorna White and her colleagues. I start from the viewpoint that people experience tension between wanting to join together and the need to be separate; between the need for togetherness and belonging, and the need for an independent identity. In simple terms, I aim to focus on one particular group at work and how that group is affected by unconscious processes. I also put forward the idea that gendered racialisation, the making of subject positions, and the making of real and phantasised relationships, are constantly played out in interactions between group members.

9.1 Songhai Empire

The Songhai Empire is the NOMS head office. As explained in the introduction, NOMS is an executive agency of the MOJ. It was created in 2004, in response to the Labour Government's ambition to achieve a better balance between the prison population in England and Wales and the resources available, by increasing efficiency, reducing unit costs and encouraging innovation.

Songhai Empire is responsible for delivering the Ministry's Departmental Strategic Objective, operating with the agreed Agency Framework Document that was produced in 2009, which outlines the role of Songhai Empire. Songhai Empire is a significant part of the Prison Service because it controls the bureaucracy and organises and administers the

service that impacts on the day-to-day life of every prison across the country (Fitzgerald and Sim, 1979), and also the Probation Service. There are different departments in Songhai Empire that have responsibility for different aspects of the operational framework that governs prisons and probation. For example, there are departments that focus solely on the security of prisons, offender learning, or interventions. For the purpose of this chapter, I concentrate on a specific function of the Songhai Empire, that is, the development and implementation of drug interventions in prisons as presented by Lorna White.

The introduction of a new drug strategy, in response to the Drugs Act 2005, saw the recruitment of specialists at the Songhai Empire who were employed to devise a plan to implement the drug strategy in prisons, as well as introduce innovative ways for integrating a variety of approaches to reduce substance misuse among those in custody (Home Office, 2005).

Lorna White was recruited as a specialist to devise systems for implementing the drug strategy across the prison estate. I explained in the literature review that the Prison Service recruited specialists who were non-operational staff to deliver specific services. I also said that specialists were greeted with resentment (Thomas, 1972) and suspicion (Kauffman, 1988) by operational staff. On the other hand, specialist staff may also have been idealised because of their specialist training and skills. Lorna White may have encountered additional tensions as a result of the intersection of race and gender, which

may have produced anxiety derived from the fear aroused by the dynamics of inter-relationships between different gender and racial groups. This in turn activated group defense mechanisms. These are defense mechanisms that may appear rational on the surface, but may be counterproductive as they can be hostile to the task of implementing new initiatives across the prison estate.

One of the first issues that Lorna White faced on taking up her new role was to develop relationships with colleagues. She also had to learn to negotiate the organisational culture. She says she was initially overwhelmed by enthusiasm with her experience at Songhai Empire:

Wow, was the first thing that came to mind, urm it's been a lot of, few highs and quite a few lows as well.

Lorna White had to establish herself quickly by introducing her new initiatives across the prison estate. Within a few months of taking up the role, she was making a positive impact at Songhai Empire and was being recognised by her superiors. She explains:

I think there was a lot of people that were surprised, that somebody so new to the service probably not that anyone ever said it but, but being a black woman as well after I think after nine months I got promoted to senior manager.

She may even have been initially idealised by senior managers, which is shown by her promotion within nine months of joining the service. Lorna White also received acknowledgment by ministers for her innovation and positive results. She alludes to this below:

Urm, I started eight years ago and I went in as a specialist to sort of to develop a particular area it was really high profile, there was sort of a lot of ministerial focus on the area of work, a lot of targets that needed to be achieved, urm so the work was really, really intense. I got promoted really quickly within 9 months I got promoted, to head of a section...

It became apparent that her innovations were rapidly expanding and her targets increasing. Lorna White automatically responded to the increasing pressures, perhaps acting in an omnipotent way in identifying with the idealisation. She may also have identified with the organisational pressures to meet the demand of successfully implementing the drug strategy across the prison estate, thus taking on the extra responsibility to ensure the strategy's success by doing whatever she could to achieve the targets. She may have also felt pressured to maintain her professional success. These pressures resulted in her working long hours in an attempt to continue to meet the growing demands with limited resources. She states:

But again with that came longer hours more responsibility and what have you, the work was really, really at a high profile so I came in at a high urm got known through certain departments really quickly was kind of having contact with ministers so it just felt really high profile and so because I came in like that I guess I assumed that kinda, that's how it was working at that grade that's kinda of what, the level of the work and level of my profile and all the rest of it, I just kinda imagined that's how it was going to be like that... but I had a really small team, the targets were kinda getting bigger and bigger and I just didn't have the staff to manage it. So urm I was repeatedly speaking to my line manager [Peter] saying I need more resources, I need more staff whatever, and again in the back of my mind, always, I thought are people just thinking I am trying to empire build can they not actually see I do need these resources to be able to meet these targets? I mean the amount of, I was kinda getting into work at 7 o'clock in the morning and leaving at 11 o'clock at night it was I mean just ridiculous the hours I was putting in to kinda keep up that is there were some that was beyond me and I needed the staff, but wasn't getting anywhere...

Lorna White was unable to sustain the pressures she encountered as a result of the insufficient staff and lack of resources. She approached her manager Peter requesting additional staff and resources to accommodate the increasing pressures. Her account also suggests her awareness of more hostile feelings from others, when she questions whether her colleagues perceived her requests for more staff as a means to 'empire build'. In such a context, while Lorna White was attempting, and wanting, to do a good job, she was also

wary of her colleagues and how they perceived her. Indeed, this account shows the way organisational structure and process evoke emotional dynamics in interpersonal relations. Furthermore, there appears to be tension between Peter and Lorna White in response to the increasing demands, the changes this caused to the structure, and work activity within the department. This is shown by Peter's response to Lorna White's request: it was unsuccessful. The withholding of resources is viewed with mixed emotions; Lorna White questions the rationale behind Peter's reluctance to take on board her request. She is also suspicious of Peter's stated reasons. This is an example of how the organisational culture of suspicion and mistrust becomes ingrained in the way employees interact with each other. The refusal to honour Lorna White's request may also be experienced as an attack in both reality and in phantasy. The attack is experienced as concrete when Lorna White finds out there was financial support available, which was withheld by Peter. She continues:

I found out my manager [Peter] who I had repeatedly been going to said I need these resources, was sitting on several million that he hadn't spent and obviously, he had that money and could easily have you know developed my team for me to do the work and urm and urm his answer was well, that will make it more of an operational unit we're a policy unit so it, that was his excuse for not kinda of giving me the money, which I didn't even know there was money, but that was his excuse now how he wasn't reprimanded sacked whatever, for sitting on that money and not using it, I don't know.

An additional contextual factor to take into account here is that the increasing targets and success of the drug interventions signified changes in the department, and the increase in staff resources would have initiated a change in the working dynamic of the team, which Peter was resisting. This is shown by the justification given by Peter for withholding funds. According to Lorna White, however, it was to prevent the department changing from a policy unit, which focuses on developing new policies that individual prisons adhere to, to an operational department, which would involve the department expanding to incorporate the responsibility for the delivery and monitoring of the interventions across the prison estate.

This incident illustrates some of the complexities in Bion's thinking, in particular the tension between the work group mentality. It also opens up the possibilities for exploring the interplay between Lorna White and the group composition in terms of membership, as well as the organisational processes and the play of race and gender in her accounts. From an organisational psychodynamic perspective, the above account reveals hidden and covert dynamics in the organisation, namely, that funds were available that Peter had access to, but that Lorna White was not aware of as a result of their superior/subordinate position.

My discussion thus far has shown how two senior managers responded differently to the changes the department needed to make as a result of the success of a new initiative. I

have given examples of the defenses that were mobilised to overcome the threat of change. I have also showed how organisational structures may act as social defense mechanisms to protect staff against anxiety.

I now want to delve deeper into the source of the anxiety that was discussed earlier, by examining the organisation as a whole. The Songhai Empire's environment is highly emotional, because of the pressures and demands of being in control of all prisons in England and Wales. Yet it is stripped of emotion in terms of the codes of the organisational culture that act as defense mechanisms, which result in a failure to acknowledge the anxiety inherent in the system. I refer to Stuart Stevenson's (2012) article, written in a UK context, to examine how anxiety may be destructive to an organisation if not adequately contained.

Stevenson asserts that 'there is a need to experience a degree of anxiety in most tasks; however, when the anxiety becomes overwhelming, this constrains the organisation's potential' (2012, p. 132). I concur with Stevenson's assertion that there is a need for an element of anxiety in organisations, because some degree of anxiety may improve performance on a range of tasks. However, severe anxiety can have the opposite effect and hinder performance. It is also important for there to be an awareness of the various sources of anxiety, as well as a facilitated working through of the unconscious aspects of the organisational tasks. This is necessary, because when anxiety is insufficiently acknowledged defensive mechanisms are mobilised that can lead to the perpetuation of

the very destructive practice that the individuals who work in this environment may purportedly be striving to correct. This creates a paradox of contradictory, yet interrelated, elements that seem logical in isolation, but absurd and irrational when appearing simultaneously.

Stevenson's article further revealed how race and gender dynamics created complex dynamics of difference among a group of black child protection experts. In describing the psychodynamics of the organisation, Stevenson asserts that:

The organisation struggled to recognise necessary difference and was overly attached to notions of sameness that extended not only to race and gender but also in terms of roles within the organisation and the inputs of consultants (2012, p. 131).

Stevenson's discussion drew upon the psychoanalytical work of Melanie Klein (1932, 1935, 1946) and Isabel Menzies-Lyth's (1960) organisational defenses against anxiety, to analyse how his black female colleagues were initially functioning within the paranoid-schizoid position, in response to the unconscious phantasised threat of Stevenson, a black male colleague. This was an all-black organisation. However, assumptions should not be made in relation to the fact that all the staff were black, as tensions may still arise that mobilise defensive processes within an all-black organisation, as purported by Stevenson. This highlights the complexity of intersectional identities, such as gender and race, which

are dynamic processes rather than bounded identities within inter-racial organisations. In this organisation, gender difference and role variation were the source of the anxiety, which needed to be worked through for the individuals to function as a collective group. Stevenson documented the move to the depressive position in which the group were able to appreciate gender difference, accountability and dependency, and at this point they began to work effectively.

The issue of tension and anxiety amongst black groups within organisations has not been explored in this thesis because the primary focus of the participants' narratives was the theme of relationships between black women and white male/female colleagues, which was important to the group. In the following section I will examine the impact of gendered racialised dynamics, drawing on Bion's (1961) concept of groups to analyse the anxiety associated with the uncertainty of introducing new drug interventions across the prison estate.

9.2 The impact of basic assumption functioning at Songhai Empire

The successful implementation of the drug intervention strategy across the prison estate appeared to be overshadowed by the increasing targets and demands to maintain sustainability at a high level. This created a sense of vulnerability and anxiety within Lorna White, Peter and Joseph as a result of the complex political and professional issues that were taking place in response to the Drugs Act 2005. It seems that Lorna White adapted to these pressures by working longer hours and requesting additional resources.

The accounts given by Lorna White indicate that Peter responded in a defensive way, by using authority to withhold resources, and thus undermined both Lorna White and the strategy. Lorna White's account of Peter's actions indicate a resolve to adhere to structural hierarchy, which may be thought of as retreating behind the organisation's social defenses. Other colleagues, such as Joseph, initiated social defenses to avoid the anxiety caused by the demands of the growing targets and the fear of failure. The discrepancy in the way each of these individuals responded to what was going on at Songhai Empire at the time is an indication that people in organisations are not just rational, highly focused people, but in fact are persons subject to many (often contradictory) phantasies, conflicts, defensive behaviour and anxieties that are both conscious and unconscious. Edgar Schein (1996) implies that when groups are not cohesive, innovations either don't occur or fail to survive and proliferate. This might be a result of the way members of a group interact with each other when completing tasks. Bion's (1961) work group and basic-assumption mentality functioning, and its development in the work of Gordon Lawrence et al. (1996), may provide a deeper insight into the intrapsychic and interpersonal world of the key players involved in the scenario described in this chapter.

The account below provides an insight into how the group became dysfunctional. When its members were unable to maintain the work group, they entered into basic assumption mentality because they unconsciously feared the consequences if the team expanded under the control of a phantasised Lorna White, which was perceived as a threat and thus

resulted in envious attacks (Stein, 2000) to destroy what was once idealised. Lorna White says:

urm eventually when the targets weren't being met and Joseph got wind of it, somebody was sent in to have a look to see what the issues were. I sat down with her [Eve] and said look these are the issues I haven't got the staff, I've been saying for the last year I don't have the staff but it's not getting anywhere. Urm she said 'Oh well what is it, show me' you know. And I said, 'I've even done a chart of the staff that I need what the costs would be', and she was 'Oh well let me have a look at it'. So I showed this to her thinking she will go back and report to whoever, they'll say oh well that's the answer then, the answer was here all the time, we'll just give her the resources and she'll get on with it and targets will be met. Well what happened was of [*sic*] she went with that bit of paper and she got given, I don't know several hundreds of thousands to set up a new unit to do the work. So urm, to say that was a low point [Lorna laughs uneasily] doesn't even begin to touch it.

At first Lorna White viewed Eve positively, but after she had taken her ideas and implemented them as her own, Lorna White's view changed towards her. The scenario indicates that the group is functioning within a basic assumption dependency. The anxiety created as a result of the failing targets is too much to bear both in reality and in phantasy. This demonstrates how the process of organisational inter-relations gives rise to

emotions that lead to mistrust, suspicion, rivalry and competition. It appears that omnipotence is invested in Eve as she is expected to protect Lorna White and Joseph from their anxiety and it is anticipated that she will protect them and solve the problem. This is shown by Lorna White's initial reaction to Eve. She believed Eve would secure the resources she had requested, and that she would then be able to continue implementing the drug strategy. She therefore surrendered all responsibility to the phantased leader. Likewise, Joseph expected Eve to solve the problem; this in turn would reduce the anxiety produced in response to the fear of failure. Eve was expected to ensure sustainability in exchange for the funding and responsibility for setting up a team to progress Lorna White's innovations.

We can also think about this scenario by using an intersectional framework and in considering that Eve may have used her shared gender identity to win Lorna White's trust in order to receive her ideas. This is shown by Eve meeting with Lorna White and then feeding back her findings to Joseph. Eve was not prepared to share the task with Lorna White and took over her ideas. Perhaps Eve relied on her shared white superiority to take control and secure the resources that Lorna White had requested. The following extract shows the social and psychic meanings attributed to race intermingling with organisational dynamics.

So the whole thing was just completely devastating and obviously for me I kind of looked at, as well again is it, you know she [Eve] was somebody who was known

in the service for a long time, a woman, but yes a white woman. Had I been known in the service for a long time would it have been different? Had I been a white woman would it have been different? So it was just I, just really lost faith in, in the service and had considered, did consider leaving urm because I just thought well I don't know I've done all this work I've slogged myself almost to death working all the hours and what for what? For somebody else to just come along and be given all the resources that I had been sort of begging for.

What you see is Lorna White explaining what happened in racial terms. This provides an insight into how race plays a significant role in Lorna White's experience. There is a perceived familiarity between Eve, Peter and Joseph as a result of their assumed long length of service. There are also shared racial characteristics between them, which is significant when the adverse treatment of black women as a result of the intersection of race and gender is taken into account (Crenshaw, 1991). Bearing these two points in mind, Lorna White's gendered racialisation and length of service outweighed her innovations and commitment, resulting in the incident. This observation is supported by the following account:

Yeah, definitely I think urm (4) I think there was lots of issues sort of personality wise with urm one sort of senior manager not, not my line manager, but one of the senior managers in particular. Urm (1) and how much of that was to do with race or personality, it's sort of hard to kind of separate the two. (1) and yes I was quite

high profile in that role, you know everyone knew me in that role for that job and it was something that I'd worked hard to get and I think that was the thing that in all the years that I'd spent, you know sort of doing degrees and that and the other for it literally to be kind of taken away.

Lorna White's account also subtly refers to the bureaucratic routines and pseudo-rational activities such as moving a qualified individual out of a role in which she is proficient and replacing her with someone who may not be as well qualified or a specialist. The decision to replace Lorna White with Eve suggests there was a gradual obscuring of organisational realities. I am suggesting that Lorna White was competent to fulfil the role, yet she was replaced by Eve. This may have been perceived by Lorna White as a form of 'ganging up' against her because of the reasons she alluded to above. Furthermore, these persecutory feelings seem to have been fuelled by gender-racial connotations that will be explored in more detail in the following section. Clearly the incident greatly affected Lorna White and she developed a negative view of the organisation.

9.3 On the margins: The impact of discrimination

Discrimination affects people differently, and the meaning of discrimination varies amongst individuals. For the purpose of my discussion I am using the term to refer to the decision-making process that led to Eve taking over Lorna White's initiatives.

Lorna White perceived the 'playing field' to be unlevel and that Eve was appointed because of her race and/or gender. This is highlighted by the following quote: 'you know she was somebody who was known in the service for a long time, a woman, but yes a white woman.' Lorna White's reference to Eve's 'race' shows that racial difference was important. Furthermore, Lorna White felt that Eve had used her insider status to her advantage, that is, her length of service and being well known. This may be understood as discrimination because Lorna White was an 'outsider within', a result of the intersection of gender and race.

Lorna White was thinking about leaving the Prison Service because of the incident discussed. She explains:

So as I said I kinda of half decided I was going to leave and then by chance a job came up which was in another area I was interested in, so I thought actually rather than leave I would move across urm to that team which I applied for the job, got it, that immediately I think it felt not like a huge step down, but a step down because the work wasn't so high profile it wasn't so intense, urm the kind of pressure and level I was working at, the environment was much more relaxed which was good, but then at the same time I still kind of felt that it was a step back and so it was almost like yes it was a job wanted to do, but at the same time almost like being punished for any. So it was a really, really difficult time and you

know I kind of focused on the work that I had to do. Urm and got it done but staying in that team where the work has become less and less critical to the service. I think and urm I think our roles have changed and my work changed immensely again where this woman who was given this money to set up this unit, the unit expanded and expanded and it got to a point where she didn't want anyone who wasn't in her unit doing anything kind of similar and at the time I was doing something similar but with a different client group.

There appears to be words missing from the above account when Lorna White says 'I still kind of felt that it was a step back and so it was almost like yes it was a job wanted to do, but at the same time almost like being punished for any'. The gaps in this sentence might be an indication of the pain Lorna White was experiencing at the time. Her thinking of leaving the organisation may be analysed within the framework of basic assumption fight/flight (BaF). There are indications of her feeling 'punished' as stipulated above, which suggests her initial thoughts of leaving were to avoid these negative feelings, which in phantasy was experienced as persecutory, thus creating anxiety. Her transfer to another department was perceived as a demotion, which created even more negative feelings. I relate Lorna White's experience to a social experience of racialised and gendered oppression which may create a sense of helplessness and disempowerment. This further highlights how the social and organisational elements are linked. That is, the intersection of race and gender, as well as her specialism and length of service, affected the way Lorna White was perceived by her colleagues and the way she was treated.

In the account above there is a sense of Lorna White taking up both fight and flight assumptions in response to the incident. On the one hand she splits the world, whereby Eve becomes the enemy who needs to be avoided; so, rather than working with her, Lorna White considers leaving her field and going to work in another area of the organisation, but in fact continues to work in her specialist field. Then she takes up the flight position, which she gives up once she realises that Eve wants to expand further and encompass her within her department. From a social aspect she withdraws, and decides to work in roles where she does not need to engage with other people; this is an indication of detachment. I set out my reason for using this term in the next paragraph.

At the beginning of the first interview, Lorna White spoke vibrantly when she explained her role and quick promotion, and the popularity she encountered as a result of her high profile and success. However, this excitement diminished as the interview progressed. Her mood became flat and sullen, her tone quietened, and she appeared detached from her story, as though she was telling the story of someone else. There may have been an element of projective identification because I also felt sad towards the end of the interview. I related Lorna White's mood change and tone to detachment. Detachment is used to explain how a person becomes physically and emotionally detached. The former refers to a person wanting to be alone and not work with others; the latter can be used to describe a person with a negative/sad emotion present at a particular time. In Lorna White's case she remained detached for a number of years after the incident. This might

be because the detachment was a defense mechanism against the pain she experienced as a result of the situation described earlier.

In the second interview I asked Lorna White to describe how she felt about being physically and emotionally detached from her specialist area and the people she worked with. She responded by saying:

Urm I mean the detachment, the detachment is still a feature because I said the job hasn't changed so because my role, I don't work sort of closely with anyone and I don't manage a team, so I am quite, and manager isn't hands on, urm so in that sense I am still very, very much detached and I guess kind of looking at it, now that I'm looking at it with a different eyes there would be opportunities for me to engage with people more so if I chose to. (1) But thinking of it part. Again just taking a step back and looking at things in some senses I kind of work better in that detached way, because I can just get on more with things.

Lorna White begins by stating that her 'detachment is still a feature'. She reflects on how she responded to the incident she discussed in the first interview. She describes how she withdrew and distanced herself from everyone around her. The anxiety and pain associated with the incident remains because she continues to prefer to work by herself. She explains her need to be alone. This might be because she finds it difficult to feel

comfortable with others around her. This is noted by her decision not to work with others when the opportunity became available for her to do so. What is interesting here is that Lorna White talks about looking at how she responded to the incident from a different angle, yet she rationalises her detachment, her need to continue to work alone, by stating she is more productive when she works alone. This is an indication of a defense mechanism. In the next excerpt, Lorna White implies that she is relieved, or maybe even happy, not to be involved in the drug strategy field because changes have been made that she does not support. This is another example of detachment, but now she has become detached from the work. She says:

Urm (2) and but in terms of being detached from the job, (1) I think I started to look at it with a fresh pair of eyes and I think where I'd been struggling against it because it was sort of forced upon me. Urm I just think there were a few things that had happened in the drug treatment world which is where I'd come from. One was kind of under the new sort of coalition with their, the way they were kind of looking at how they wanted drug treatment to be changed. I just thought actually I wouldn't have wanted to be part and parcel of that process anyway because I don't think the changes are right, but then also what that meant for the department that was dealing with all the programmes and drug treatment was that it was being cut left right and centre and I think had I been there I would have been victim to whatever extent to those cuts.

Lorna White's detachment from the job and her colleagues indicate a flux or process in which the source of her anxiety constantly changes over time and fluctuates between her relationship with others, her relationship with the organisation, and her relationship with her specialist field. Towards the end of the above excerpt, Lorna White explains that if she had remained in her previous department she 'would have been a victim' as a result of the cuts being made to the drug intervention programme. This suggests that anxiety may be generated by changes such as a decrease in the provisions and not just in dealing with difficult co-workers, or being replaced by someone else, or increasing pressures. In the following extract the tension between wanting to work alone and wanting to work with others is even more evident. She begins by continuing to justify her decision not to work with others, but then she questions her colleague's perception of her, and there is an indication of her feeling guilty for avoiding working with this member of staff. She explains:

I'm quite fine with it. [Lorna laughs] I think I know one colleague who I know in particular, likes to do a lot of joint work with people, I know when I first joined she was on about and for a long time. She was 'Oh let's do this together and that together'. And kind of seemed good at the time but then I'd get another piece of work that would take me in a slightly different direction, so I think she's given up now. But I think where I say our team has got smaller over the years I'm almost the only person left that she could potentially do anything with, so I kind of feel her kind of coming back round to sort of making the suggestion. And at times I kind of feel bad because she must think oh I'm trying to avoid her, but I think

there is something definitely about personal styles of working. Urm and as I say I think mine is very kind of independent, anyway and at the moment the team that I'm in that I am able to kind of do that without it kind of causing my manager or anyone any problems that I am aware of. Urm, and I think where, especially where I'm not particularly motivated in my current job in a way I don't want anyone to see how de-motivated I am, so it's easier for me to kind of just keep my distance as well, urm, yea.

The impact of the takeover affected Lorna White for some time, and she insinuates that this negative experience makes her reluctant to work with others; she justifies her avoidance to undertake joint work by stating that she does not want others to see she is 'not particularly motivated in my current job ... [and] how de-motivated I am'. This attitude supports the claim that Lorna White was applying, and continues to apply, psychosocial defenses to protect herself from the negative feelings she encountered working at Songhai Empire. In essence, there is a self-imposed isolation to avoid 'problems'. This is a central theme in Lorna White's story and is a result of the takeover, which created a catalyst of manifesting defense dynamics that has lasted for a number of years.

9.4 The psychodynamics of race and gender

Earlier, I stated that in situations of staff diversity, the psychodynamics of organisational processes cannot be understood without paying attention to the impact of gendered

racialisation on the conscious and unconscious relational field. In this section I examine the impact of emotions that are collectively produced, performed and interwoven by social and psychic manifestations.

In continuing to explore Lorna White's account, it may be seen that she discusses how the intersection of race and gender acts as a constant reminder of her gendered and racialised difference. She highlights her visibility within the organisation, by stating:

Again being a black woman for me sometimes it kind of feels like you're this person that everybody kind of knows and remembers be good or bad, because you're, you so easy to spot, you're not a white man in a grey suit and you know there are even probably there's more white women, I would say maybe since I've been in the Prison Service. So yes the gender thing may have shifted slightly but in terms of kind black women in senior positions forget it, I'll always be the only black person in the meeting you know people will come up and say, 'Oh Lorna White'. Like, okay I can't even remember who you are, or where I know you from, but you obviously remember me because I'm that black woman who was in the meeting. So I found that I am much more aware of myself as a black woman and not that that's necessarily a bad thing because it has enabled me to move to places like where I live now, where again am the only black person, because I kind of know what that feels like now. [MT 'Yes'] But urm, it kind of just means you just need to be aware of whatever you say or do it will be remembered

because you are so easily (2) because you are so easy to remember. So it's just like the impact is just much self-awareness in terms of me being a black woman and the hierarchy, I just find so frustrating because it just sets up barriers that don't necessarily need to be there and people can kind of hide behind if they're at the right level of the hierarchy and then again it's another thing people judge you by, you know they assume because you're within that hierarchy you're good enough for certain things and not other things. So yeah it's a difficult system to work in at times definitely.

It appears from the above account that Lorna White felt she was constantly under scrutiny from her colleagues. This made her feel under more pressure than her white peers because her actions, whether 'good' or 'bad', would be remembered. Lorna White was easily recognisable because she was a 'black woman'. She draws a distinction between herself and white women that exemplifies her unique identity as a gendered and racialised subject. Moreover, this echoes the axiomatic image of white and male employee that Lorna White refers to as 'white men in grey suits'. She is fully aware of her minority status as a result of her gender and race. This might be an additional pressure because it means she cannot operate like any other employee doing a job because there are no other employees who share her gender and racial characteristics at her level. This realisation is emphasised by her comment 'I'll always be the only black person in the meeting'. On the one hand, Lorna White views her minority status as creating barriers within the workplace. It is unclear what exactly she is implying here, but the barriers might be in relation to negative racial stereotypes. On the other hand, her

minority status is viewed in a positive way with regard to her feeling comfortable living in an area where she is the only black person.

After closely analysing Lorna White's situation, it is apparent that gender and race equality policies have not improved black women's advancement or authority in the British Prison Service. Rather, it shows how the category 'gendered' is intentionally punctuated by that of 'race'. This view is supported by Beth Mintz and Daniel Krymkowski's (2011) study completed in the US. Their study used whites, African-Americans and Hispanics to evaluate race and ethnic differences by paying attention to the intersection of race/ethnicity. The study reported that white men maintained their advantage in the occupational hierarchy in the period during the investigation, and that white women made more progress than any other group. The authors state that the reason for white women's progress is a result of changes in two additive effects: the cost of being female has declined over time and the white advantage has increased. A review of organisations by Ryan Smith also found that 'racial and gender disparities in authority, concern the racial and gender demography of the workplace and the tendency on the part of authority elites to reproduce themselves through both exclusionary and inclusionary processes' (2002, p. 509).

Another pertinent point is that the intersection of race and gender places black women in a unique position that is different to white women, as subtly noted by Mintz and Krymkowski's (2011) findings above. This might explain why Lorna White was not

given support by her superiors, whereas Eve, a white woman, was able to secure funding to progress Lorna White's innovations and received support from Joseph and Peter who were both white men.

Lorna White's high profile and the takeover by Eve may also be examined from an organisational psychodynamic angle. The former's high profile and the anxiety this created may be viewed as being produced by unresolved and unrecognised organisational difficulties. She may have been perceived by her white colleagues as being a threat to the axiomatic white, male organisation. This may have created anxiety and fear of loss of control and/or change to the status quo of the dominant group. These often unsubstantiated feelings are perpetuated because organisations are emotional places where phantasies and desires generate unintended consequences. Decisions are made in an attempt to manage or control social situations, and as part of a continuous process of coping with the internal conflicts and contradictions that are integral to organisational roles. This view may be used to explain what happened during the scenario described by Lorna White earlier. Mahmut Bayazit et al.'s (2004) quote encapsulates what may happen between staff and managers when they assert:

[a] psychosocial work environment evolves from social and interpersonal relations between organisational actors; this is a result of formal and informal interactions and negotiations among employees and between employees and management. (2004, p. 84).

This supports the claim that organisations are emotional spaces that comprise a series of positive and negative emotions. In this context, I propose that they create feelings of anxiety that people aim to defend themselves against. In this situation, the anxieties are produced ultimately from a sense of losing control and fear of failure. It is this rationale that I put forward for the reason why Joseph sent Eve to investigate the reasons for Lorna White missing her targets, and authorising the takeover of the department. The unconscious processes in this scenario, whether individual or strategic, may be understood as a mental territory of dangerous and/or painful ideas that are avoided by the initiation of defensive mechanisms. Yiannis Gabriel and Dorothy Griffiths (2002) claim defensive mechanisms allow for the resistance to certain ideas and emotions, even where convincing reasons and explanations are given. This idea may be used to understand what occurred during Lorna White's meeting with Joseph when she met with him to plead her case to continue to lead the drug intervention strategy. She describes what happened below.

But anyway, she was given this money, off she goes develops this unit, takes half my staff, urm with her because she obviously needs people that kind of knows how to get things up and running quickly. Urm, so yeah I was absolutely devastated, devastated that I could be treated like devastated to know that there was money about and I had just not been urm given it to use it, devastated that manager [Peter] watched me like a dog when he was sitting on all this money, and devastated that when I then said to her [Eve] I need to speak to Joseph, explain

that you know, I knew there has, was an issue, I've been asking for support whatever, begrudgingly I was allowed five minutes with Joseph who basically didn't kinda, his mind was made up that this money was going to go to this woman [Eve] and it was like I didn't have an opportunity to say hang on I can do this job, if I'm given the resources that I've been asking for.

A psychodynamic analysis of the meeting between Lorna White and Joseph indicates that it involved the mobilisation of complex emotions and politics that were difficult to understand and probably overwhelming for Lorna White because they were immersed with gendered and racialised manifestations. The original decision to allow Eve to take over Lorna White's work was complicated by the political interests, alliances and strategic choices, as well as by the phantasies and the motives, of others. Furthermore, the fears and anxieties, and the two individuals' desire to control and/or to avoid the situation they faced, also played a part. Finally, there is no appetite for the group (Lorna White, Peter, Eve and Joseph) to develop, and thus Lorna White was expelled from the group.

Lorna White was given a short time to meet with Joseph and felt she was not given the opportunity to put forward her case to continue to implement her initiatives. Perhaps she felt as though she had not been listened to, yet she refused to be silenced and spoke to Joseph. She may have compartmentalised her emotions to resist the discrimination by working on smaller projects within her specialist area until she was forced to work in another field. Prestige of position and success did not protect her against the inequality

caused by the intersection of race and gender. Ironically, years later Lorna White remained 'devastated' by the way she had been treated. She provides no indication of whether she was given any emotional support after the event. However, it is fair to assume that she did not receive any emotional support from colleagues because in her accounts earlier she described a process of withdrawing from them.

In this chapter I have attempted to provide a way of thinking about Bion's concept by examining the relational dynamics that occurred in a senior management team based at Songhai Empire. This theoretical framework was used to examine how the implementation of a new drug strategy was experienced by Lorna White and her colleagues, and focused particularly on the defense mechanisms that were initiated during the situation.

From a combined intersectionality and an organisational psychodynamic angle, I was able to shed light on how the psychodynamics of organisations may illuminate the ways in which gendered and racialised difference may fuel the existing social and psychic struggle, which the organisation is unable to contain through its structures and practices, thus provoking anxiety between members of a group. My discussions outlined the importance of understanding how the intersection of gender and race may create relational dynamics within a group. In relation to Lorna White, there were moments of baD (basic assumption dependency) that involved her being dependent on others; baF was shown in Lorna White wanting to leave the service and also her determination to

meet with Joseph; and baP (basic assumption pairing) in the pairing of Joseph, Peter and Eve against Lorna White. These key interactions during a difficult period were evident in Lorna White's narrative.

10 The Emergence of Strong Black Woman (SBW) in the British Prison Service

We know what's going on,
The difficulty and despair,
Which challenges us regularly,
But yet we continue to bear.

Marcia Thomas

This chapter explores the emergence of the notion of SBW within the prison context, to bring together the thread that runs through this thesis and present the idea that the notion of SBW influences the way in which black women experience their work reality. I further suggest that the intersection of race and gender form a unity around which black women's subjectivity is formed. This produces a particular subject position with specific characteristics ascribed to these individuals, such as the notion of SBW. In relation to black women, this means that their understanding of the world and themselves are products of simultaneous, yet distinct, processes of racial and gender inequality in the UK. By presenting participants' thoughts, interpretations and feelings towards the SBW ideology, it is hoped that their shared subjective realities will be illuminated to show their unique experience as intersectional subjects.

The notion of SBW has been the subject of research for many years in the US. For example, Tamara Beauboeuf-Lafontant's (2009) study, completed in the US context, focused on the voices of 58 black women and their discussions of what strength meant to them. The study traced how discourses of strength have been constructed in society. She found that expectations and the strategy of strength influenced black women's daily reality.

The application of the SBW ideology as a social and psychological concept to explore black women's reality within the British Prison Service has not yet been theorised. What will follow, therefore, are discussions that bring together an overview of the data chapters in collaboration with the notion of SBW, the aim being to examine how the ideology is constructed and may be mobilised by participants. Each participant, regardless of her situation, exhibited an element of the characteristics of SBW. For example, in Chapter 6 I put forward the view that prison culture is entwined with suspicion, mistrust and violence. Such an environment may produce anxiety that needs to be defended against. This fertile milieu mobilised characteristics related to the notion of SBW in two ways. Consciously, individuals can draw on the social characteristics of the ideology, such as inner strength, perseverance and resilience. They can also draw on these social characteristics unconsciously, as a psychic defense to protect against adversity, difficulty and also as a means to disguise the more unpalatable aspects of themselves.

Chapter 7 documents the transition of two black women from POELT to prison officer. I provided a glimpse of an initiation process that involved witnessing racially motivated C&R incidents. I further showed how the participants refused the organisation's attempts to de-sensitise them towards institutional racism. An example of this is shown in the extract below, taken from Ella, who was introduced in Chapter 7. She describes the aftermath of the incident in which C&R was used on an Irish prisoner.

But anyway, after six months after the investigation came through it was found that the two officers had nothing to answer for, the only recommendation was I received extra C&R training because obviously I'm not aware of, I didn't know the difference between C&R and assault, because obviously I'm stupid [Ella says this in a patronising way]. Which I was furious about and I went to Samson [the prison Governor] and I was so angry because it was wrong. It's wrong because I know what I saw, I know you only apply C&R because somebody is going to harm themselves or harm you. He tripped him up, he put his knee in his back, I don't make things up, I'm a big woman I don't lie.

The officers involved in the above incident were vindicated, and it was recommended that Ella received additional C&R training. Ella remains steadfast in her account of what happened and the injustice, demonstrating her determination not to accept the use of C&R as a means to physically abuse prisoners from minority backgrounds.

In Chapter 8 I discussed how a black female participant who, when faced with the audacious task of introducing the race relations agenda in a YOI, had to negotiate her work environment and the difficulties of forming new working relationships with her white female colleagues. In the extract below, Lisa describes how she managed her relationships in order to compete to get an additional member of staff.

The staff, oh that was good, urm (1) there was lots of wrangling urm (2) and urm there was, urm somehow managed to keep everybody sweet, despite everything.

The above comment shows self-perseverance, an awareness of knowing your opposition, knowing your work environment and the importance of negotiation. These are traits associated with the notion of SBW.

In Chapter 9 I offered a glimpse into the dilemmas faced by a participant who endeavoured to defy the stereotype of not being 'good enough'. She was determined to make a positive impact and achieve personal and organisational goals by working long hours. Lorna White articulates this view in the extract below.

I guess it's something about wanting to do the right thing and wanting to make a difference. ... I guess the professionalism is about trying to do things the right way and properly and making sure I'm giving the best sort of service I can do.

Urm (1) I guess if I'm doing those things and I feel that I'm doing them well then I guess it gives me that kind of self-worth or, yeah.

What is evident from each of these chapters is the cross-cutting theme of the SBW ideology, and it is my intention to sketch some of the central components related to this ideology. Here it is worth noting that I am not suggesting that there is an essentialist construction of black woman Prison Service employee, and at this point I therefore emphasise that I do not want to argue that my application of the SBW ideology is the only acceptable way to explain the subjectivity constructed at the intersection of race and gender in this organisational space. In fact, the epistemological framework I employ is explicitly designed to encourage and sustain critical dialogues that acknowledge complexity and contradiction.

I begin by showing the distinction between the social representation of SBW and the discursive emergence of this ideology. It is worth noting that the authors I refer to are not necessarily using the SBW concept as a defense in a psychodynamic perspective, which is the way I apply the concept. The authors I cite refer to this ideology as an alternative coping strategy, a conscious and cognitive mechanism that black women deploy in difficult situations. I, on the other hand, use the SBW concept with reference to both the conscious and unconscious, that is, that the notion of SBW is a defense mechanism, a protective measure for dealing with adversity, as well as a method of disguising the more unpalatable aspects of an individual's own aggression and vulnerability. By exploring

participants' descriptions of the SBW role; that is, their perceptions of contextual factors, benefits, liabilities and beliefs in how it influences aspects of their work experience, I aim to develop a conceptual framework to understand the SBW ideology.

10.1 The origin of the SWB ideology

It is important to examine black women within a socio-historical context, because for many years they have been portrayed as having remarkable strengths and coping abilities, which have been purposely distorted by the dominant groups (Hill Collins, 2000; hooks, 1993). Scholars such as Tamara Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2009); Trudier Harris (2001); and bell hooks (1981), have argued that economic disadvantage has resulted in an egalitarian relationship between black women and black men with shared responsibilities for the management of household duties and financial responsibilities, albeit in matriarchal households in which the woman is the dominant member within this family structure. Black women have worked hard to support the household single-handedly and have adapted to various roles, while transcending societal barriers to survive, and this may have resulted in them being referred to as 'phenomenal' (Angelou, 1981), because of their significant coping abilities.

Within dominant heteropatriarchal and racialised ideologies, traits related to the SBW ideology – self-reliance; independence; strength; assertiveness; perseverance, etc. – may be understood as 'masculine' traits within the terms of this ideological framework. These traits are considered appropriate when displayed by men, but are perceived as extremely

threatening by dominant groups when exhibited by black women. This might explain the stereotypical image of black women portrayed in literature, movies and advertisements as 'Mammy', 'Sapphire', or 'Whore'. This is an indication of how black women are presented as intellectually inferior, sexually promiscuous, and possessing a 'dominating character' (Hill Collins, 2000; Moynihan, 1965).

The implications, origins and socio-historical significance of black women's self-reliance, need to be recognised and understood to grasp the significance of the legacy of SBW ideology. This ideology has been passed down from generation to generation as an inherent part of the culture and shared subjectivity of black women. What is also important to understand is that this cross-cultural tradition of strength and self-reliance, which encompasses all women of African descent within the African Diaspora (Safa, 2006), may transcend different ethnic groups; thus, even in situations where a discourse may not exist for a particular individual when faced with adversity, black women from various ethnic groups are surprisingly able to draw on a discourse that stems from the collective consciousness of racism. Historically within the work environment, black women have encountered an accumulation of racial inequality, and social, political and economic exclusion. These inequalities have adversely affected black women's work experience. It is from this perspective that I am able to apply the notion of SBW as a conceptual framework to examine the psychosocial experience of black women within the prison context.

10.2 Conceptualisation of the Strong Black Woman (SBW)

The ideology of SBW is a cultural phenomenon with social characteristics. It may also be described as having a psychological element, as postulated by Regina Romero (2000), who asserts that the SBW concept is used as a psychological defense by black women. The ideology has both positive elements when used in moderation (Hamin, 2008) and negative implications that may lead to health problems such as stress or isolation, which may affect black women's interpersonal relationships and how they experience their reality.

The SBW ideology is a salient culture symbol (Harrington et al., 2010). Dhakirah Hamin suggests that:

Conceptually, the SBW is an icon, an expectation, and a coping style, that most black women are striving to achieve. However, it may become a defensive style when black women pretend to have these attitudes/behaviours or use them in an extreme manner (2008, p. 22).

Hamin's quote highlights the various axes of the SBW ideology, which shows how it affects black women's social life, how their social life is built up from, or conditioned by, the ideology, and illustrates the need to take into account the influence of broader social views, including the manifestation of the SBW concept, amongst black women as a group

within the workplace. Moreover, it is a discursive construction, a set of processes of collective meaning-making, which produce social bonds uniting individuals across time.

According to Charisse Jones and Kumea Shorter-Gooden, writing from a US perspective, the SBW ideology is based on a series of paradoxes:

Black woman is strong, she cannot be beautiful and she cannot be feminine. If she takes a menial job to put food on the table and send her children to school, she must not be intelligent. If she is able to keep her family together and see her children to success, she must be tough and unafraid. If she is able to hold her head high in spite of being sexually harassed or accosted, she must be oversexed or promiscuous (2003, p. 2).

In similar vein, Tamara Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2009) postulates that the SBW notion acts as a 'double edge sword', metaphorically speaking, in respect of the sword being a tool to incapacitate black women further, that is, to further subordinate them, while simultaneously using the ideology to convince black women to aspire to become strong black women. Joyce Ladner (1995) suggests that the SBW ideology forms an intricate part of black women's identity. According to Patricia Thompson (2003), black women's determination to overcome adversity is a result of the SBW ideology that has developed into a culturally accepted coping strategy to help black women deal with stress factors. This view was presented by Dawn Edge and Anne Rogers (2005) who postulated that:

Intrinsic to the notion of being 'Strong-Black-Women' was the ability to deal effectively with the range of problems occurring in everyday life. Dealing with it was used as shorthand for personal and autonomous proactivity, problem-solving, and mastery over life events and ongoing difficulties (2005, pp. 15–25).

The idea of 'strength' is paramount to the SBW ideology, and thus can sometimes be construed as being synonymous with the black woman. This is a result of the portrayal of black women's perseverance and resilience through adversity.

Within the British context, strength associated with the notion of SBW has been studied by health care professionals to ascertain black women's experience and engagement with mental healthcare professionals. Edge and Rogers (2005) investigated the ways in which black Caribbean women living in the UK held culturally specific ideas about perinatal depression and coping with personal adversity. Their study found that their participants relied on a self-concept that stressed the importance of being SBW for maintaining psychological well-being, thus minimising the notion of depression as an illness. Gail Lewis (2000) examined how black women in Britain use the category experience in social work practice to give meaning to the power relations that exist as a result of racial inequalities within the profession. She found that black women's experience of racial marginalisation and their ability to resist an oppressive matrix of social relations and overcome adversity was rooted in a notion of strength. It was a strength her participants

felt to be a culturally provided resource that helped them negotiate racist and sexist discrimination.

Specific characteristics associated with the SBW ideology do not appear to have been identified amongst white women. That is, that the notion of strength was not found to be central to the meaning-making of white women. Isis Settles et al.'s (2008) study provides evidence for this claim. They applied an intersectional theoretical framework to examine how race influences black and white women's perceptions of womanhood and found that black and white women had similar broad perceptions of womanhood, categorised within five themes: gender-based mistreatment, perceived advantage, friendships and community, caretaking, and work and family options. However, within each theme they found significant differences. They found an additional theme within the black women's group: 'inner strength'. Settles et al. suggested that black women attributed their inner strength, that is, their personal and emotional strength, to being black women, a combination of their race and gender identity and the hardship they have suffered across generations.

The discussions thus far have indicated that strength consistently forms a central part of the SBW ideology. However, as mentioned earlier, strength is entwined with other characteristics, such as independence, perseverance and emotional resilience, as inherent qualities that black women possess. As a group the participants displayed and exhibited perseverance by focusing on their duties and priorities. They persistently refused to give

up, drawing on inner strength and other coping strategies such as resilience and determination to overcome their challenges.

10.3 What does SBW mean to black women Prison Service employees?

The data chapters show a conflicting web of positionalities occupied by black women as a result of the complexity of gendered racialisation and occupation. Many of the participants in this study made sense of the notion of SBW as arising from the adverse effects of socio-cultural experiences, including racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination in society. Their racial/cultural, gender and spiritual identities and a sense of worth in self and community appeared to have a direct relationship with their views and how they related to the SBW ideology; this view is supported by other scholars who have studied the notion of SBW from a cognitive and psychological perspective (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2009; Hamin, 2008; and Edge and Rogers, 2005). The question below was posed to all participants who took part in the second set of interviews.

‘What are your thoughts about being described as a SBW?’

I begin with a quote from Lisa, who was first introduced in Chapter 8. In the following excerpt, Lisa describes the SBW ideology in terms of the familiar trope of a ‘suit of armour’. In Lisa’s account there is a sense of how the characteristics of SBW are

internalised. She further explains how she applies the notion to everyday life and uses SBW as a means to help her endure the adversities she has encountered working at HMP Nok. Lisa fervently states:

I love it, [MT giggles] you know, I'd like more of it, urm but in terms of urm, (1) I'd like to actually be that person without feeling like urm, (1) I'm not really that person, but urm the definition of what it means, yes you know I'll pull through, urm I don't go off sick, urm you know I get all my jobs done, never turn up urm to a meeting without all my actions [MT 'Urm'] urm, urm started etc. I would like it to be much more genuine in terms of being very much more comfortable with myself, urm much more urm at ease and urm much more (4) I would like to own that and embrace that as a positive rather than as a urm, urm a suit of armour and protection. Does that [MT 'Uhuh'] do? I'd like to actually walk in as a positive urm Asian particularly black woman and be just quite at ease with that and urm, and you know I do feel the way forward is urm and my role...

In the first part of the excerpt we get a sense of her excitement and pride at being referred to as a SBW. We can understand how SBW is something she wants to aspire to, but feels as though she has not accomplished this, which is highlighted in her statement 'I'm not really that person'. There may be an initial tension or disconnect with the ideology, because the concept is linked to the African Diaspora. Lisa is British Asian, so her

wanting to be more 'genuine' 'comfortable with myself' 'at ease' may also contain that element of wanting to be more comfortable with her ethnic self, not 'someone else's' ethnic self.

Nevertheless, Lisa articulates some of the traits that form the SBW ideology, such as getting the job done and commitment to doing a good job. There appears to be some reservation on her part, indicated when she states 'I would like it to be much more genuine' as she does not fully embrace the term in relation to herself. This suggests that there is uncertainty with regard to the way she perceives herself in her working environment. Her response to the notion of SBW connects strongly with the literature I cited earlier and with the psychoanalytic notion of defense – that our defenses help us survive, but at some point are just as likely to leave us feeling a bit empty, or not genuine, because the external version (SBW) does not match up with the internal experience of ourselves. The tension seen in Lisa's account is very interesting, because she appears to be hinting at the possibility that SBW is a process which you 'become'. Ellen Harrington et al., (2010) also postulated this idea, which is pertinent and leads to the question of how black women view 'becoming' a SBW. Toby Thompkins (2004) implies strong black women are not born but are bred. I understand this to mean from participants' thoughts that becoming SBW happens over time, in which black women begin to perceive themselves within the SBW ideology. This might be a conscious or unconscious process, a form of 'becoming'. Charisse Jones and Kumea Shorter-Gooden infer, through their documentation of SBW discourse within the US context, that black women embrace the SBW notion and 'take on multiple roles and myriad tasks ... to fulfil the stereotype'

(2003, p. 3) through their socialisation and interactions with others. They further assert that through this process:

[It][the SBW ideology] often seep[s] into their inner psyches and become[s] permanently internalised, battering them from within even if they're able, for a time, to wriggle free and live the truth. Stereotypes based on race, gender, and social class make it hard to trust oneself and to trust others who look or behave like you do. They set confusing parameters on who you think you are, and what you believe you should or can become. They often dictate what you expect, what seems real, and what seems possible (2003, p. 4).

It is this idea – that is, the process of becoming SBW, the conscious and unconscious action to call upon an infrastructure of strength to overcome adversity within the workplace, whether or not the ultimate outcome of the situation is positive or negative – that leads me to use a Kleinian framework to analyse participants' thoughts about the SBW ideology and the role of the concept in the psychosocial experience of black women Prison Service employees.

I now turn to Rosa, who was first introduced in Chapter 6. At the time of her second interview she was working at HMP Gomma. Her excerpt supports the idea that becoming an SBW is a process. She expands the idea that black women become SBW by relating this concept to the cultural role black women engage in.

What's my thoughts?[MT 'Yeah'] urm, my thoughts. It's, I think (2) I wouldn't normally, it was another time, I wouldn't really have owned it. But now, I know I am a black, strong black woman [Rosa speaks excitedly] [we laugh] know I am now and, (2) urm I kind of feel good about it.

It may be understood from Rosa's account of becoming as SBW that there is a shift in the way she perceives herself over time. At the end of this excerpt she vehemently proclaims she is a SBW, as though she has claimed the notion for herself. I will outline Rosa's journey of becoming an SBW as shown in the following excerpt. Rosa refers to the various roles in her personal life: a mother; her role as a prison officer; and her voluntary role supporting colleagues. She is also an active member of RESEPCT. Rosa highlights a complex dynamic that sometimes creates role confusion within the workplace, and which may be related to Chela Sandoval's (1991) notion of oppositional consciousness, that is, that the formation of consciousness produced from the position of marginalisation may force some black women to feel they have to identify themselves in two social fields, thus having to navigate the space between institutional exclusion and recognised prison employee. From this intellectual positioning, they develop a specific consciousness that resists dominant/oppressive ideologies and representations. They are beset with the idea that inequality and exclusion is fundamental within prisons as a result of the organisational culture, and this lived experience of institutional exclusion may shape the gendered racialised consciousness of black women working in prisons, thus instigating

SBW as a psychosocial defense. It is this idea that leads me to relate other scholars' suggestions that black women as a marginalised group have developed a collective oppositional consciousness. This may be related to the notion of SBW, which creates and perpetuates cultural responsibilities such as caregiver and supporter of others. These are roles that many black women are socialised into accepting. However, these ascribed roles sometimes bring with them problems and additional pressures within the workplace. Rosa illustrates this view when she says:

I kind of come into it at a time when I wasn't expecting it, I was able to manage it, urm, but the skills I've attained through being a mother have helped me with my work, particularly with prisoners. The opportunity of now trying to be, trying to help staff [MT 'Huh'] urm (1) the mother protection bit [MT laughs] is there as well, helping urm (3). So yeah I think, I'm willing now to probably accept that I probably am, if I denied it before. I don't know what I said. [MT: 'I've not asked that question before'] Oh didn't you? [MT 'No'] No yeah, I think all black women should feel good about their selves and urm remember they are individuals and they're people and, and probably take strides and ensure they're recognised as that really.

Towards the end of Rosa's excerpt she seems to go to something more ordinary and less omnipotent than SBW implies. There is a recognition that black women need to be aware

of the biases they face, and the need to work through the restrictive images they hold of themselves in a quest to understand their own identity as black women.

From both Rosa and Lisa's accounts of their view of becoming a SBW, a picture of how they relate to the SBW ideology as a result of the difficulties, challenges and frustrations they encountered and overcame during their work experience is made apparent. Lisa's description of SBW encapsulates how the ideology is used as a psychosocial defense mechanism, which enables black women to handle adversity and remain in control, while recognising the limitations and pressures the SBW ideology may create when attempting to live up to the stereotype. This view is shown in Lorna White's interpretation of SBW, who shared her story in Chapter 9. She describes how she relates to the SBW ideology.

Again I guess in the last, since, since we last met, I don't know I just think this strong black woman. I'm not sure if [Lorna laughs] it's such a good urm. I think there are positives in it, in that it means (1) it gives you that kind of urm (2) encouragement and motivation that. Yeah you can [Lorna speaks in an upbeat tone] do things and you can achieve and you know, you can get through the challenges. (1) But on the other hand it can also (1) give this feeling of the strong black superwoman. And, and maybe that's me, maybe let me just bring it back to myself. Maybe it gave me this feeling of the strong black superwoman and actually there is only so much that anybody [MT 'Urm'] can do, even a strong

black woman and I think that, that's the kind of place where I'm at now. It's like yes you can be a strong black woman, but there's still a limit and that doesn't take away your strength, it just means being kind of realistic about the [MT 'Urm'] boundaries that you, you know, for me to kind of protect myself.

The above extract is very interesting because Lorna White begins by highlighting the paradox of the concept, that is, she implies that the SBW ideology can be both positive and negative. She also refers to the motivational and empowering aspect of the ideology. She describes how she had internalised the SBW ideology when she turned to her inner self for support rather than turning to external sources. Lorna White's account indicates some resistance to the omnipotent idea of SBW and recognition of the problems it can create. Through inflections in her voice she appears to be debunking the SBW ideology by making a claim for realism when she states 'there is only so much anybody can do' and also by pointing out the mystical illusion of SBW that infers that black women have to be 'superwoman'.

The idea that the notion of SBW contains negative and constraining aspects was also referred to by Little, a 32-year-old black mixed-race heritage Programmes Facilitator at HMP Bamum, who explains the negative consequences of the SBW ideology when she says:

Well, as I know that, that's something that's historically causing many problems because if somebody describes themselves as being strong [Little sighs] then when you feel weak you're not free to articulate that because there's such an emphasis on you know strong black woman [Little speaks quietly]. And I think you know people often describe me as. I mean how do I feel about that? I think there is a truth, I think certain things have to contend with because (3) I don't know...

In the beginning of the extract, Little refers to the burden of being perceived as a SBW, that is, the tension created by the SBW ideology and the lack of discursive space that might enable black women to articulate their weaknesses and need for support. This implies that these needs are muted because the SBW discourse dominates. There is an expectation that black women are strong and therefore are able to take on the difficulties that occur as a result of living in a racist and sexist society, without faltering or being scared or vulnerable. This is an unreasonable expectation, yet many black women identify with it, embracing the additional burden as well as fulfilling their work duties. This is a result of the influence of black women's socio-historical legacy, to prove themselves at all times, which has been embedded in the black woman's unconscious. Some black women may feel they cannot afford to show vulnerability as this will be perceived as weakness, the paradox being that, by not showing vulnerability or weakness, they in fact perpetuate the SBW ideology.

If the SBW ideology creates additional burdens for black women, it may also attract negative projections from other workers. Ella first featured in Chapter 7. In the following account she speaks about the negative projections from her white colleagues.

I'm a strong woman anyway, the black doesn't have to be in there but if you want to put black, bully for me. But I mean I am a strong black woman, but urm that doesn't make me likeable because white people don't like strong black people [MT giggles]. They like people who are weak people, people who they can, urm conform, turn to be like them. Ella's too black (2).

Ella's account illustrates the various positions located within a particular occupational space as a result of her gendered racialisation. It raises the issue of whether the notion of SBW is mainly about black women's subjectivity and sense of themselves based on identification with a socially available category, and/or about white people's or black men's perception. Scholars such as Tamara Beauboeuf-Lafantant (2009), Toby Thompkins (2004) and Susan Martin (1994) have shown that the SBW ideology is about black women's subjectivity and self-identity, while simultaneously it is a perception held by white people and black men that emanates from the historical and contemporary social organisation of difference. In this way it is a discursive terrain that positions black women, while simultaneously operating as a meaning-making device for those who inhabit that terrain.

From a psychodynamic perspective, the first part of the excerpt above illustrates a form of splitting of Ella's various identities, shown when she emphasises that she is a 'strong woman', disregarding the racial element of her identity for a moment, but she then states 'I am a strong black woman'. She goes on to refer to her white colleagues in particular and their discernment of 'strong black people', stating they prefer weak people, 'who they can ... conform, turn to be like them'. This is a significant comment when taking into account my earlier discussions in Chapter 7 about the initiation of new prison officers into the organisational culture, and the organisation's attempt to suppress racial difference through its structure and practices.

More information about Ella will provide context for her account above. She has worked as a TSPO for approximately four years. Ella has encountered difficulties in securing substantive promotion as a SO. She has attended many interviews and unfortunately has not been successful in gaining permanent promotion. Ella feels her lack of success in securing promotion at HMP Dahomey, her second prison, is the result of her white colleagues' dislike of her. She describes how she feels about this in the excerpt below:

I was on there for a year and they re-advertised the post, there were 3 SO TSOs on there we all qualified April 2007, we all have come over there now. There's 3 on there, there's 3 positions right, we all apply for it, Ella doesn't get it, because Ella only got 125 on her board because the other 2 one got 168 and the other 172, and the pass mark is 150. So Ella doesn't get it, but Ella got offered it temporarily. So I'm not good enough for the job, but the next day I'm on A shift managing a wing

and brucking up [patois for breaking up] fights left right and centre [MT laughs], but I can't get the job, right. So I knew it was a dig at me because I remember it's in the Governor's power of discretion or the chair of the board [MT 'Huh'] to say you know what you didn't get high marks but with development we can get her up to. I know it's not cheating [MT 'Huh'] it's investing in your staff in your people look how long Ella's been qualified let's help her, [MT 'Huh'] it's about giving me that step [MT 'Yeah'] because if you see, if I get that step Marcia I'm clear, I will not stay as an SO now we ain't got no PO grade even better, even better because give me 2 years as SO and I want my SO [MT 'Yeah'] I want it bad...

There is substance to Ella's claim when she describes the barriers that have prevented her promotion. Authors such as Ella Bell and Stella Nkomo (1992) and Marilyn Davidson (1992) have referred to this as the 'glass ceiling'. These barriers are a result of gender and racial inequality that black women encounter because of the intersection of race and gender. Ella brings up the issue of 'not cheating', if she were given opportunities and support to progress. Her comment is an indication of her questioning her legitimacy and her eligibility for mentoring that has been found to be beneficial for career advancement (Catalyst, 1999). This might be a sign of her internalising the negative stereotypes ascribed to black women with regard to 'not being good enough' or worthy to receive support. This mindset allows the SBW ideology to influence black women's actions in this situation, thus preventing the individual from actively seeking support to progress her career.

When Ella uses the phrase 'dig at me' I have interpreted this to denote a hostile environment that she is attributing to the Governor. She makes reference to the fact that the Governor had chosen not to use his discretion in giving her permanent promotion, but rather chose to promote her to TSPO, even though she had passed her SO JSAC (Job Simulation Assessment Centre). Ella speaks in the third person in the above account, which, from a psychodynamic perspective, provides an indication of her denying parts of herself. She may feel she has to deny her feelings towards her lack of career progression. Her stance changes as shown in the extract below, however, when she describes the negative emotions produced by the disadvantages she has faced in her career.

It makes me feel. In the first, two years, three years I felt angry, frustrated, now I'm not bothered, I just think you know what, fight me all you like [Ella speaks defiantly] I'm gonna get it, because I am determined I ain't ever give up, never thought you know what they not gonna give it to me, I'm not applying for no more. No I'll apply for them, they've got three advertised now and I don't want, I only want the one that I'm doing, but I will apply for all three of them [Ella speaks in a tone] because I don't want them to say to me, I'm not actively seeking promotion, because that's what they'll say if I just go for one [MT 'Urm']. So if I go for all three of them, they've got to have a really [MT 'Urm'] frigging good, good story [MT laughs] why I never got one [MT 'Yeah']. But if I go for one, it's

easy to say well sorry we couldn't, you can't get that one, but you didn't go for the other two so that's not available to you. That's what they'll say [MT 'Urm'].

The above extract highlights how difficult professional encounters, such as restrictions in gaining promotion, run parallel to common human experiences of struggle and difficulty. This creates a series of projections in which unconscious processes such as vulnerability, hostility or otherwise difficult feelings may be disowned by an individual and attributed to someone else. The other person may then, as a result of the interaction, actually experience the feelings as his or her own. This idea might be extended to include groups of individuals, as in the case of Ella where she is referring to more than one person. Ella's statement describes blurring of boundaries and highlights a complex dynamic in which she wants to be seen as being competent and able to secure promotion, but may need support to do so. The need for support, however, may be seen as weakness that is too painful to accept; thus there is a need to hold on to the notion of SBW, which incorporates the belief that black women are able to overcome challenges single-handedly. This position of self-reliance creates a sense of isolation, which is a negative consequence of the SBW ideology.

The discussions above not only have shown how the SBW ideology perpetuates black women as indefatigable, unshakable and tireless, but also how they struggle to manage the ideology. These paradoxes are thus projected on to others, preventing the individual who is doing the projecting from experiencing all aspects of human emotion. This

illustrates how the SBW ideology may be used as a psychic defense. When the notion of SBW is constantly mobilised as a defense mechanism it may be detrimental to black women as they are unable to admit and experience being vulnerable, needy or weak. The consequence of this is that they lose out on the support they could receive to reduce the intensity of the challenges they encounter.

In light of the supposition that all black women are able to endure adversity as a result of the SBW ideology, as a group they may feel obligated to support black colleagues who experience unfair treatment and lack of opportunities. Black women may feel they have a sense of responsibility towards people of their racial group, based on the stereotype ascribed to the notion of SBW, specifically in relation to the capacity to be resilient and self-reliant. This sense of duty is captured in the excerpt below taken from Lesia, a black African Caribbean Senior Manager who works at Songhai Empire.

I don't mind it because it lets other people know that they too can be. I wouldn't want people to be strong based on what I have had to do, to be strong, because it, it, it comes with the territory, either you go up or you go down. And, and I refuse to go down, my pride and my God would not let me [MT giggles] go down [Lesia speaks with confidence]. Urm so, so I think that urm a word that I used earlier on is that I bring hope, that's what it is, I bring hope and even some things that I'm not so sure about all this work, will this work or won't it [Lesia speaks quietly] the way that I say it makes people believe that it will and they go for it and then

they tell me that they've done it and I think [Lesia chuckles] wow [MT giggles] that's excellent. So, so I think people have confidence in me [MT 'Huh'] and, and then there needs to be a strong black people otherwise you'll have very weak people below. When I say 'below' I'm not talking about age, I'm just talking about in their journey and there, they've got to have hope. So I think I bring hope.

Lesia's statement 'you'll have very weak people below' is an indication of her drive to create a positive legacy by inspiring lower grade staff to achieve so that they can acquire desirable qualities, such as confidence and competence, to progress. This highlights her perceived sense of duty, her belief that others look to her for inspiration, and thus she has a sense of responsibility to display characteristics related to the SBW ideology to empower others. Lesia's account highlights how many black women place the needs of others above their own, showing how they cultivate their strength through selfless acts of motivation and protection to empower others, and in doing so, black women acknowledge their self-worth. This illustrates the way in which the SBW ideology interweaves through black women's psychosocial experience, that is, the preoccupation of always being battle-ready to overcome personal challenges, as well as having the strength to support others through their battles. It also highlights the complex inner world and external relationships black women encounter within the workplace.

10.4 The notion of SBW as a psychic defense

Psychosocial defense mechanisms may be linked to organisational dynamics, white masculine norms, and organisational culture that black women challenge by their presence as employees. Prisons therefore provide a fertile environment in which characteristics related to the notion of SBW may emerge. I further suggest that the intersection of race and gender may create a unique experience for black women that is constituted by, and constitutive of, SBW, which is taken in, located and animated in everyday practices in the workplace.

In Chapter 6 I put forward the idea that the organisational culture of prisons creates an environment in which suspicion, mistrust and violence may thrive. I further suggested that individuals who do not fit the axiomatic prison employee image, that is, white male prison officer, may encounter a range of long-term adverse issues. Here I also want to point out that black women enter the Prison Service with a set of ideas/expectations gained from their experience and positionality outside the prison itself, which means they may develop an expectation about how they will be received and perceived. Thus, as a result of their gender and race, they may be susceptible to negative treatment, which creates a sense of not being wanted or belonging, and which leads to isolation. They may also be perceived as a problem, an imposition. This precarious position is shown in the extract below. At the time of the interview, Shirley, an Asian Manager G, was working at Juffure Regional Office. She had been placed on the redeployment register because her post as Diversity Manager had been removed.

My very first prison I visited was Juffure and I didn't find the staff very friendly and um I was visiting detainees at the time and I was part the support group as well. So I always felt that I was on the side of the advocate for the detainee or prisoners as you would say at the time. (1) And um I had, I believe I had a negative viewpoint about the Prison Service and um I was always taking up cases of discrimination (1). So I was never very comfortable with the prison environment or the staff and I always felt like I was shouting my head off at meetings saying this is going on, that is going on. And I even did an investigation into discrimination which took just over 2 years and I felt I was ousted by the Governor at the time because he wrote me a letter saying how dare you accuse my staff of being discriminatory and um I persevered and I had the silent treatment at the race relations meetings for a little while...

In the above extract, Shirley states that she had a negative view of the Prison Service prior to her employment. This illustrates that she had an expectation of the organisation based on her social experience and previous work supporting detainees. She may have anticipated being treated in a negative way because of her appointed role and previous interaction with the prison. Shirley encountered negativity that affected her confidence and made her think about the reason why she received a backlash for doing her job. The excerpt below is a testament to the negative emotions she felt.

And I felt quite, I felt very affected by that experience because it knocked my confidence slightly (1) in terms of trusting the prison urn I found them very biased as well it didn't feel like they listened to what you had to say, and if you're asking me if that's because of my ethnicity, I don't know, I couldn't answer that urn. (2) It was a real challenge because I felt there was nobody supporting me at that time.

The excerpt above raises an interesting point with regard to how different staff are accepted and rejected by superiors. Shirley is not clear about the reason for her rejection, which indicates that it is not straightforward; that is, it may not necessarily be a result of ethnic and/ or racial and/or gender difference. Shirley's rejection may have had a direct link to her involvement in the investigation, or it might have been a result of her role as Diversity Manager.

It is worth noting that the investigation would have been sanctioned by a senior manager at Juffure Regional Office, therefore Shirley would have been acting on the authority of the Commissioner of the Investigation, along with the other team members. She encountered a backlash from the investigation that may have been motivated by different reasons. For example, it might have been a result of her gender and/or racial difference, or non-operational status. The following quote, 'I was ousted by the Governor at the time because he wrote me a letter saying how dare you accuse my staff of being discriminatory' speaks volumes. For this reason, 'my staff' signifies how her exclusion is

produced, and the quote as a whole indicates that she was not viewed as a member of staff, that is, as a part of the 'in-group', even though she was an employee.

The incident also shows how mistrust can develop and fester within an organisation. At the start of her narrative, Shirley indicated that she had a negative view of the prison and felt uncomfortable in the environment and with her colleagues. Her subsequent treatment at meetings, receiving 'the silent treatment' and an intimidating letter from the Governor, reinforced her negative view of the organisation. In addition, the treatment was quite harmful because the situation affected her confidence and placed additional strain on her relationship with her colleagues.

From an organisational psychodynamic perspective, the mistrust, suspicion and attack in the sense of being ousted and shunned by colleagues produced negative impulses that needed to be managed. This is done by channelling these negative emotions into the SBW ideology, which is deemed to be a positive constructive effort. There is an indication of this in Shirley's account: although she does not refer to the notion of SBW, she describes the situation as being a challenge with no support, yet she has also stated that she persevered through the difficult period.

This response to adversity highlights the distinctive set of experiences that arise from black women's socialisation, culture, political and economic status, and also highlights

their lives in the interstices of race and gender, both in relation to external reality and their internal world. This positionality, a result of the intersection of race, gender and their occupational identity within the British Prison Service, may lead black women as a group to draw on a specific genderised and racialised defense mechanism such as the SBW ideology.

The internalisation of the SBW ideology becomes a psychic defense, initiated to protect an individual from anxiety and the fear of being isolated and marginalised. The threats within prisons are intensified because of the volatile environment; therefore black women may project a SBW veneer that keeps all others at a distance and acts as a masquerade of their inner feelings, vulnerability and fear. Anastasia, a black British Diversity Manager at HMP Benin, explained:

Urm and I've had staff curse me and I've had to kind of, I don't really, sort of have a quiet word with people, (1) but it's very direct and very personal and very in your face, but very nicely done, with respect, but I, I don't stand for the rubbish, purely because the environment is very predatory, it's urm sort of like if they smell your fear you'd be eaten alive. So you have to grow really thick-skinned armour and you know look not necessarily sound but make sure you give the vibes that says do not mess with me, or else.

First of all, Anastasia's account again illustrates the violence at the core of the organisation, in this case verbal violence and the requirement to be resilient in the face of adversity and conflict in order to survive. The excerpt also illustrates her ability to maintain self-control, an illustration of her need to remain composed and professional, as indicated by her emphasis on having a 'quiet word', which she describes as direct and forceful. Her comment 'I don't stand for the rubbish' was expressed in a very authoritative, or maybe even threatening, but calming way. It may be linked to her own sense of receiving a threat of attack before being attacked. This may also be linked to psychic defense in the sense of her putting the aggression on to others and outside herself. Whereas in fact Anastasia is just another member of staff caught up in an organisational culture that does not allow difference/vulnerability, and she is not going to either, as stipulated by her comment.

Anastasia's approach also demonstrates her flexibility and/or ability to rebound from adversity, to cope with, adapt positively to, and manage major difficulties and disadvantages in her work environment. This might also be an indication of her thriving in the face of what appears to be overwhelming odds, as she insinuates that the environment is predatory and therefore that signs of fear may have negative consequences. Anastasia subtly alludes to the cognitive aspect of the notion of SBW when she talks about having to be 'thick-skinned' and portraying a façade of strength. At the same time the situations described by Shirley and Anastasia exemplify how the notion of SBW may be mobilised in difficult situations without individuals being consciously aware of this happening. Finally, the responses to difficult situations described by the

participants above highlight how the SBW ideology of perseverance, inner strength and survival is analogous to the socio-historical role the SBW ideology played during slavery.

10.5 What makes us strong makes us weak

The discussions in this chapter have shown that acting within the SBW parameters involves having to be constantly independent, persistent, and available to whatever challenges present themselves, which means there is no space to receive support, to be nurtured by others, or to just stop (Romero, 2000). This observation is exemplified by Marcia Gillespie (1984) in the quote below:

Think about it: how many times have you heard the term applied to a woman whose life no rational person would choose in a million years? Some sister, struggling under an impossible load, who'd love to be able to shrug her shoulders or at least have a few other shoulders to share the burden with. 'That's a strong black woman,' someone will say in solemn, near-reverent tone that is usually followed by a moment of silence. It's almost as if one were judging a performance instead of empathising with her life. As a result, her complexities, pain and struggle are somehow made mythic ... placed on a pedestal rather than helped (1984, p. 33).

It is therefore not surprising that black women become everything to everyone and that their own needs are abandoned. Laura Randolph echoes these sentiments when she posits 'by the sole virtue of my race and gender I was supposed to be the consummate professional, handle any life crisis, be the dependable rock for every soul who needed me' (Randolph, 1999, p. 24). She further asserts, 'when you're raised to believe that the ability to kick adversity's ass is a birth right. ... You tend to tackle life's afflictions tenaciously.' In addition she states, 'however, this myth also tricks many of us into believing we can carry the weight of the world' (Morgan, 1999, cited in Randolph, 1999, p. 24).

There is a sense of why living up to the SBW ideology is emotionally difficult and why it may have an adverse impact on black women's well-being. Angela Neal-Barnett (2003) conducted a study in the US where self-identified SBW filled out a diary detailing their activities and emotions. At the same time their blood pressure and heart rate were being monitored. Neal-Barnett reported that the participants did not report being stressed when in stressful situations and when their blood pressure monitor and heart rate increased dramatically. She found that the women were aware of their stress levels but were unwilling to admit this was problematic. This indicates reluctance on black women's part to show weakness and the automatic need to internalise emotions and stressors.

I have shown how the internalisation of the SBW ideology becomes a psychic defense within the prison context, which may mobilise consciously and/or unconsciously the

notion of SBW as a psychic defense mechanism as a means to control the way black women behave and think in order to protect or 'defend' themselves. The SBW concept was applied to examine how black women distance themselves from a full awareness of unpleasant thoughts, feelings and behaviours to avoid anxiety. I also showed that when the SBW ideology is used as a defense mechanism the individual is not aware of it. This is an indication of the individual functioning in what Melanie Klein (1935) describes as the paranoid-schizoid position, or what John Steiner refers to as a psychic retreat. This is a concept used to explain the patient-analyst encounter. Steiner defines a psychic retreat as 'a state of mind in which the patient is stuck, cut off, and out of reach, and he may infer that these states arise from the operation of a powerful system of defences' (1993, p. 2). Psychic retreat in this context is applied to understand how the notion of SBW is deployed as a psychic defense when a black woman is in between the paranoid-schizoid position and depressive position. This space is 'often experienced spatially as if they were places in which the patient could hide' (Steiner, 1993, p. 2). Psychic retreats may appear consciously or in unconscious phantasy, as literal spaces on the one hand, or take on an inter-personal form, usually as an organisation of objects or part objects which offer to provide security, on the other. Therefore, only through a progression to the depressive position will the individual have an awareness of the defense mechanism in action.

To summarise, the participants' accounts demonstrated their ability to recognise a significant impact of the notion of SBW in the way they endure adversity and display a façade of strength within the workplace. Despite the differing views towards the SBW ideology, there was an underlying current that participants appeared to relate to, that is,

the realisation that black women encounter adversity that activates aspects of the SBW ideology.

In relation to the prison context, working in this occupation may be described as a significant, and quite possibly life-changing, phase in a black woman's life. While the working environment may bring about positive work experience, the encounters may also be filled with painful psychosocial moments. This view may be used as an explanation for the reason why the SBW concept was interpreted in different ways by participants. The variation in the interpretation of the notion of SBW might be a result of different factors such as experience, work environment, etc. This is an important point, because it illustrates that black women Prison Service employees are not a homogenous group; in fact their experiences are very complex. From a psychodynamic perspective, their relation to the SBW ideology signified a shift from the paranoid-schizoid position to the depressive position.

11 Personal Reflections of a Black Woman Practitioner–Researcher

In Chapter 10, I brought together psychodynamic ways of thinking and intersectionality theory to explore how the notion of SBW might be understood as a psychic and social defense against anxiety and adversity within the workplace. I considered how a cultural and social phenomenon such as SBW might act as a psychic defense mechanism on the one hand, and as a set of cultural characteristics ascribed to a specific group of people on the other hand, thus providing this phenomenon with the capacity to influence the psychosocial experience of black women working in the British Prison Service. The idea that black women's gendered racialisation positioned them in various subject locations, which in turn created an array of psychodynamic interactions, was explored.

In this chapter I want to elaborate on the ways in which the intersection of race and gender may subtly spill over into the research process and initiate a series of defense mechanisms between the participants and myself. I also want to focus on the individual and personal experience of being a black woman practitioner–researcher in relation to others, as well as how the cultural aspect of SBW initially influenced my role as practitioner–researcher. This dual role, underpinned by my gendered racialisation, impacted on the way I perceived myself; unconscious phantasies were evoked and acted out that triggered a withdrawal into what John Stenier (1993) refers to as a 'psychic retreat', or what I refer to as an SBW psychic retreat. This withdrawal to a psychic place gave me temporary relief from the anxiety, pain and shame stirred up by my multiple roles.

The SBW psychic retreat at first inadvertently hindered my analysis of the data, by preventing me from taking a holistic view of all the data gathered. I found myself drawn to data that reinforced the notion of SBW. My withdrawal into the SBW psychic retreat also prevented me from articulating my own anxieties, and I found myself in a mental space (Young, 1994) that unleashed a new voice. This enabled me to express my inner feelings, unleashing a silenced voice through poetry. Poetry acted as a bridge between my inner and outer world, providing a means of communicating the anxieties that resulted in a withdrawal into the SBW psychic retreat. The articulation of my fear and pain enabled me to reflect and explore how the unconscious influenced my own actions during the study.

11.1 Practitioner–researcher

I will refer to William Edward Burghart Du Bois' (1903) double consciousness theory to explain how multiple identities – black, woman, researcher, practitioner – led me to a new terrain that was unfamiliar, produced anxiety, and fear of failure. It is my intention to trace how I reconciled my multiple identities and how these identities shaped my perception of my gender–racial group, prison culture and university culture. Indeed, the fluctuation between researcher and practitioner may paradoxically have intensified the challenges posed by my 'outsider within' location, within both distinct but similar organisations.

Continuing with the notion of double consciousness, I will discuss the sensations of feeling as though my identity was divided into several parts. Although Du Bois' theory is situated within a race relations context with reference to being black and American, it is my intention to expand his notion while incorporating the racial element, because race dominated the way I related to the research, interacted with participants and initially engaged with the analysis of the data. I will also explore how I, a black woman, not only viewed myself from my own unique perspective, that is, as a gendered and racialised subject, but also viewed myself in relation to the way I might be perceived by my supervisors and others, which at times produced tension and felt like a struggle, and which in turn created additional internal and external pressures.

Another method of exploring the tension of being a practitioner-researcher is through a bicultural lens (Bell, 1990), to examine the bicultural pressures of being a black woman in an academic and professional world. That is, these academic and professional organisations are white and male-dominated, and they evoked a psychosocial struggle that made me feel as though I was constantly under pressure to try and reconcile the multiple roles without: (1) being looked down upon, by fellow scholars, colleagues and participants; (2) overstepping cultural and organisational boundaries, which led me to both consciously and unconsciously question whether I should open the boundaries to divulge secrets shared by black women around vulnerability and helplessness, as well as divulge organisational practices as described by participants that may be deemed to be embarrassing to the Prison Service.

I was also determined to portray black women in a positive light. (Such an approach is not uncommon amongst scholars from minority groups – Feal, 2002.)

Practitioner–research as a method of pursuing ethnographic research is challenging and difficult. Being engaged in such work challenged my world view. I was forced to re-examine the nature of my practice and review my own assumptions and the implicit value-judgements that were impinging on the way in which I was conducting my research. The process of building knowledge from within and developing an understanding of working as a practitioner–researcher within the British Prison Service was shaped by a series of decisions. I concluded that my own feelings about the data and all the narratives provided a valuable source of information that could not be ignored with regard to the research enquiry.

11.2 My journey

To describe my personal development through the research process, I draw on Melanie Klein's object relations theory because there are similarities in the way I matured as the research progressed and how Klein describes the mental development of an infant. I will expand Klein's object relations theory to develop a conceptualisation of being a black woman researcher–practitioner as a phenomenon full of paranoid affects, born out of schizoid splitting based on gendered racialisation, which initiated defense mechanisms to avoid anxiety.

At the beginning of the research process I was constantly utilising defenses as a means to protect myself from the anxiety stirred up by my dual role of practitioner–researcher.

This was particularly evident when I started the process of collecting data and interviewing participants. I wondered what social category the black women would assign to me. When explaining my research, I decided to emphasise the fact that I was a part-time research student combining my research toward a PhD while working as a full time employee. I chose not to disclose my management position unless asked directly, as I felt that if I was perceived to be a senior member of staff this would not help me because the participants might be reluctant to share their experience with a prison manager. At the same time, it was important for me to remain within a feminist framework by recognising the influence of all participants, that is, both the interviewee and interviewer (Ribbens and Edwards, 1998). I therefore endeavoured to ensure the interview situation was a comfortable space that would not be dominated by the interviewer.

My action was an illustration of splitting. I chose to suppress the managerial element of my practitioner identity because of fear of not being accepted, wrongly judged, and possibly resented by the participants. This was an unconscious decision, because even when some participants asked about my role in the Prison Service, I automatically diminished my position. On reflection, this anxiety may have unintentionally directed one of the questions posed to the participants. Each participant was asked this final question at the end of the first set of interviews:

What would you like to see come out of this research?

On the one hand, the question may have acted as a means for me to alleviate or manage my anxiety by attempting to empower participants to feel included in the research. The motivation for the latter stems from the effects of gender and racial oppression. Here I am referring to the feelings of disempowerment and invisibility, which is an integral part of my personal experience. In addition, the need to support and empower other black women, a perceived responsibility as a result of my gendered racialisation, may have contributed to the complexities and dynamism of other variables (gender, race, education attainment, grade, organisational culture) that affected my experience at this point. This shows conflicting and contradicting internal and external realities, which at the time I was unable to recognise or address because I was afraid that my dual role as practitioner–researcher would impact on my ability to engage participants, betray their confidence and inadvertently affect my ability to complete my data analysis. This was the source of my anxiety that I could not admit to myself until I acquired an alternative voice through poetry.

11.3 Turning a blind eye

As a black woman, British Prison Service manager and PhD student, there was a sense of having to maintain my own cultural identity, taking on the identity of the prison

organisation and educational institution, while striving for a sense of integration of the three identities. I recognised similar tensions in a participant. Monique is a 42-year-old Catering Manager at HMP Asante; her account illustrates the initial pressure of joining the British Prison Service as a black woman employee.

so the first day when I started urm, I wasn't that, I wasn't that comfortable, I was quite apprehensive about going to work because I didn't know what to expect really, I didn't know what the people were gonna be like, I didn't know what the prisoners were gonna be like, I'd never seen inside of a prison before, so you know you walk into that kind of environment and you kind of feel a little bit like you're a sell-out, because obviously we're black and we live in this country, you don't usually see, it's not the norm to us black folk in urm, in that kind of environment, unless we're behind the doors. So I went in the first day and urm, one of the first things I can remember was that this inmate come up to me, white inmate came up to me and said, wow one of the staff didn't expect you to walk through the doors. I said why do you say that? She went well you should have seen the look on this particular person's face when I walked in because she was obviously expecting somebody white and I was obviously black. The manager who interviewed me had not said what colour I was, he just said you know you gonna get a new starter and that was kind of like my first thing.

Monique's account resonated with me because her comment 'it's not the norm to us black folk in urm, in that kind of environment, unless we're behind the doors' showed she was cognisant of black people's subordinate position. Her statement echoed my own feelings with regard to my apprehensions about prisons and my research.

Monique further expressed her reservations about meeting her colleagues and prisoners for the first time. In the above account she described the surprise of her white colleague, by saying 'She went well you should have seen the look on this particular person's face when I walked in because she was obviously expecting somebody white and I was obviously black'. This statement is unclear because she starts the sentence by relaying what the prisoner says to her, but ends by insinuating that she saw her colleague's expression. This is a clear example of the blurring of the external and internal world as a result of phantasy and feelings of vulnerability. During the interview I may have internalised her negative emotions and feelings. I became quiet and just listened to her story. I withdrew, and perhaps unconsciously began to mobilise SBW traits, although I suspect that these characteristics were always an undercurrent throughout my life in general. The social aspects of SBW and psychological aspects of the ideology were in fact affecting my psychosocial experience of being a practitioner-researcher; that is, I was disavowing the realism of vulnerability as this was too painful to bear, because in accepting it in Monique's account I would have to face up to my own feelings of vulnerability.

This is the poem I wrote after interviewing Monique.

You are!

You're a sell-out,

You're a coconut,

You're a disgrace.

You're not one of us,

You're one of them.

You're an officer

You're a screw

You're a warden

You're nothing new.

You're no better than me,

because you have the keys.

You're just like me, but on their team.

You're black not proud,

You're surrounded by white.

You're not meant to be here,

wearing your black and whites.

You're black,

You're a woman.

You're supposed to be out there,

Not in here,

Unless you're wearing blue stripes like me.

The poem acts as a symbol of the pain of being judged by others. It also hints at the notion of double consciousness. In the context of this study it relates to the realisation of being different to white male/female and black male colleagues, a result of our gendered racialisation. Moreover, black women prison employees are different to black prisoners because of our employment status within the institution, yet we share the experience of racial oppression and isolation, which is felt but cannot be expressed because of a lack of words to describe the pain. From a psychodynamic perspective, the poem acted as a means to contain my anxieties, yet gave me a channel to express the source of my anxiety through my imagination.

11.4 Poetry as a voice

For me, poetry acted as a means of communication, which conveyed my anxieties and imagery to myself and others. Poetry as a creative construct also acted as a third space of

communication. What I mean here is that poems are part of the poet and the audience, and they are not only part of the poet and part of the audience, but also a third object, created by the interaction between author and audience.

Poetry can be defined as a complex response to anxiety. Audre Lorde (1984), in her book *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, in a chapter entitled 'Poetry is Not a Luxury', implies that poetry can be used as a tool to give a voice to feelings and ideas that are almost inexpressible, that cause pain, but which may be subtly articulated in a way which enables us to cope. The process of writing poems gave me the opportunity to experience what Ronald Britton calls 'triangular space', a space to reflect on myself as a practitioner-researcher as mentioned earlier. Britton's idea of the triangular space describes something broadly similar to what I have described in writing my poems, since it involves the capacity to imagine different kinds of relationships and to reflect on one's own psychic life: 'reflecting on ourselves while being ourselves', as he puts it (Britton, 1989, p. 87). He views the imagination as a phantasised mental space that is either truth-seeking or truth-evading.

When writing the poems, I was able to use metaphors and imagery as a means to express my feelings and thoughts. This was my way of detaching myself from the negative feelings that were stirred up and producing anxiety with regard to my dual role of practitioner-researcher and the whole research encounter. At times I felt apprehensive that I found it difficult to stay in an academic style of writing when thinking about my

multiple identities. I resorted to poetry to help me think about, and embrace, my practitioner–researcher role, and identify and address the psychic defenses that were initiated during the process of my study.

I shall now refer to John Steiner's (1993) idea of 'turning a blind eye'. This notion is applied at this juncture to examine further what occurred during the interviews with participants and my need to avoid issues raised during the interviews. The issues stirred up negative emotions that in turn produced anxiety, which needed to be defended against. I am referring to what cannot be said, what is not allowed to be seen, what is going on, which may not be clear to the reader, but which is understood by the participant and me. Here, I am not referring to the reluctance to say certain things, but am referring to the actual interview. This was particularly evident in Lisa's interview discussed in Chapter 8.

And I do find that urm, in particular in relation to urm, urm research of yours, there, there is a big divide between uniform and non-uniform staff and that is quite a challenge, urm, urm and you'll often find yourself up against it urm on that score. So with that and then be line managed by a civy who is not home grown in the Prison Service, I, I felt unspoken resentment there you know he didn't embrace me as his line manager. Urm I don't know if embrace is the right word, he, he didn't seem to accept that this civilian who doesn't know her way

around this Prison Service is his line manager and probably does know her stuff and requires you to do more (2).

Lisa is referring to the resistance she encountered from her REO and his reluctance to undertake all aspects of his role. She speaks in an occluded way. Quite possibly, Lisa may have had concerns about her management skills, but was unable to consider this as a possible reason for the contention between her and the REO. Perhaps what was unspoken and unspeakable was a fear on my part and hers about me – that I would doubt her management skills.

Another point that I feel is important to bear in mind is that there were many indications of contradictions, pauses and gaps in participants' narratives presented in the thesis. In addition, there may have been points in the participants' extracts that were confusing and appear not to make sense to the reader. This is because at times during the interviews we were speaking in an institutional language and a language of sameness, to the point where it might be suggested that there were moments of merger. Also, there were times of discordances, absences, contradictions and ruptures in participants' experiences, which speak to the anxiety caused by specific incidents.

The contradictions and mergers that occurred during the interviews was transposed to the actual writing up, which display a concrete enactment of the confusion in the participants' accounts and my understanding of this. We can sometimes relate to other people's stories, which can sometimes help us to understand our own and others' lives. I think this understanding occurred during the narratives shared, which may be used to explain how I was able to interpret the unspoken and unconscious dynamics that occurred during the interviews.

During each interview encounter, the professional and cultural parallels of common black women experience, that is, gender and racial oppression, fear, pain, and anger (Lorde, 1984), initiated a series of projections and projective identifications. Here I am referring to the unconscious process whereby vulnerable, hostile and other difficult feelings may have been disowned by participants and attributed to me as the practitioner-researcher. As a result of the interactions, I actually began to experience the feelings as my own. What is pertinent here is my realisation that the feelings I felt after the interviews were not new, but old feelings I had encountered in my own work reality that had been repressed and ignored. The participants in their accounts echoed my own anxieties and pain that I had not addressed. For example, the feeling of isolation and not belonging to the senior management group, or feeling as though one's actions were constantly being scrutinised and/or undermined.

To conclude, the internal struggle I experienced as a black woman practitioner–researcher was worth exploring in more detail because it provided an insight into the micro-politics of the relationship between the researcher and the researched, as well as increased understanding of the tensions that existed as a result of the multiple roles of being a black woman practitioner–researcher.

As a black woman researcher–practitioner, similar to black women who join the British Prison Service, I went through a process of having to adapt to my new role within the research remit, which was highlighted through the interview process. The interview encounter may not necessarily create distance or detachment between the interviewer and interviewee, but rather, in fact, may illuminate some of the shared meaningful connections in relation to gendered racialisation, which may result in the blurring of boundaries and repertoire, and also, as echoed by Ann Oakley’s description of interviewing women, result in ‘creating a cosy, friendly and sisterly exchange of information’ (1982, p. 55). Therefore, the key point of this chapter was to emphasise that, as a piece of psychosocial research, I am adding something that is central to a psychosocial approach, which is explicit researcher reflexivity. Essentially, I am putting myself in the research, but also reflecting upon it.

12 Concluding Remarks

The idea for this thesis was conceived, in part, from being a black woman Prison Service employee and feeling alienated, isolated and overshadowed by white men, white women and black men. It began from the position that studies which investigate the experience of individuals from gendered and/or racial marginalised groups solely through the prism of gender or race, result in inaccurate and obscure accounts of experience. The partial exclusion of black women in prison occupation discourse and traditional feminist and racial discourse may therefore leave black women feeling excluded and isolated in organisations dominated by other groups.

What is original about this study is that it goes beyond the individual's conscious lived experience and her work environment. It combines an approach that looks at the structural and organisational locatedness with its culture and hierarchy and goes beneath the surface by examining the unconscious, internal, phantasised world of the individual and the dynamics of the organisation, to show how the external and internal worlds can become blurred in the accounts of lived experience. The thesis shows black women as socially and psychically situated knowers who have a unique standpoint of their work environment as a result of their gendered racialisation. More specifically, the thesis demonstrates the paradox that although black women are marginalised as a result of their gender and racial inequality, they also have a status of some authority precisely because

of their employment in the Prison Service. Their experience as black women Prison Service employees is a result of the intersections of multiple social and psychic relations.

The data from this study illuminates the complexity of the power relations that operate between black women and their colleagues. These complexities ricochet throughout the organisation and thus underpin the psychosocial experience of black women, irrespective of their operational or non-operational status, their role within the organisation, their geographical location, or their length of service. Central to this field of power relations is the issue of white superiority and patriarchy. This study has shown how white superiority and patriarchy operates in relation to black women employees. For example, on p. 204 Rosa describes an incident when her white male senior officer disregards the reason for her lateness on account of childcare issues. What this shows is the larger social power relations, that is, that white superiority and patriarchy have a significant impact on black women's psychosocial experience. As a group black women are situated both socially and psychically in relation to gender and racial inequality (here I am referring to the identification with black men and white women) yet their psychosocial experience is specific to them.

What was remarkable about the participants' narratives was their focus on how they actively opposed the gendered and racialised notions that undermined their position within the organisation. I claim that traits associated with the notion of SBW were apparent, even when some of the participants were not aware of the ideology. What was

particularly evident was that the notion of SBW was interwoven in all the participants' narratives, more so than the notion of being victims of gender and racial discrimination.

The application of intersectionality theory and organisational psychodynamics highlighted the interaction of the unconscious psychic world and the external environment. What is interesting about my findings is that black women's gendered racialisation not only influenced their subjectivity, but also positioned them on the margins of the organisation. This was because they were not the axiomatic employee: white male. This study found that black women's presence as employees disrupted the organisation and created relational dynamics that produced anxiety at the individual, group and organisational level. This anxiety needed to be defended against, and as a result social defenses were initiated. It was this idea that made me expand my original thinking of focusing on black women's experience, and to explore their psychosocial experience, as well as consider the unconscious life of the organisation and the social defenses that are initiated to avoid the anxiety produced as a result of the multiple tasks of prisons and gender and racial difference.

The four research questions were fully answered. I showed how black women defined themselves as gendered and racial subjects within the Prison Service. I then explained how the specificities of the organisational culture – suspicion, mistrust and violence – was subtly embedded within individuals through informal means; this in turn affected their inter-relationships and the way they related to the organisation as a whole. The ways

in which participants described how they navigated the organisation to overcome barriers and persevere through difficult periods showed how they used a variety of psychosocial defenses that were linked to their gendered racialisation. I used the notion of SBW to describe this action. Finally, the impact of the Prison Service on black women's emotional and social construction of their subjectivity was explored in detail and highlighted throughout the chapters.

Each chapter presented one aspect of being a gendered and racialised subject within a white male-dominated organisation. The chapters also showed how the participants experienced the working environment on an individual basis, both in groups and in the wider organisational context. The chapters were structured to show the journey of entering the Prison Service as black women, which began in Chapter 6. This chapter described the culture and character of prisons. It highlighted one way in which the culture becomes integrated within individuals and influences their perception and interaction with others. It also showed that the individual inside the organisation disrupts the status quo, because she is different to the axiomatic employee and at the same time her status as employee locates her in a different position to that of black female prisoners. Chapter 7 showed how individuals become imbued with the ethos of the culture of the organisation, specifically racial discrimination. This is a critical stage for black women in their career. It is also painful because of the emotional trauma they encounter as they decide whether to allow the prison officer identity to consume their gender and racial identity and thus change their subjectivity; otherwise they face racial isolation and exclusion. In Chapter 8 the attempts made by one individual to form a protective relationship with another person

is described. Through the lens of the oedipal situation, I was able to trace how at times the main protagonist was part of a triangular relationship, while at other times she was looking on and being looked upon. There were moments when she was part of a couple, but was then squeezed out again. Crucially, she is marginalised; she does not occupy the space of true authority because she is a black woman. She may have been trying to get the authority reflected on to her from her white female superior whose authority comes officially from her status in the hierarchy, but also through her whiteness. In Chapter 9 I explore the disposition and dynamics that characterise the life of a group, which begins with a shared purpose. Success, however, leads to anxiety which the members are unable to manage and this creates tension. The members are taken over by strong emotions and fear of failure. They lose touch with the group's purpose and devote their energies to various forms of dispersal. The participant describes the negative impact this had on the way she interacted with her colleagues and viewed the organisation. The thread that runs through each chapter is brought together in Chapter 10. Here I discuss the notion of SBW. I engage in an exploration to see how participants engaged with the ideology and related to the concept. I was able to show through their accounts that the notion of SBW is a psychosocial defense mechanism that is drawn upon consciously and/or unconsciously. In this sense, the notion of SBW is more than a socio-historical concept; it is a psychosocial defense mechanism that transcends generations and ethnic boundaries and forms part of black women's gendered racialisation, perhaps as a response to gender and racial oppression. Finally, in Chapter 11, I embark on my own self-reflection of being a practitioner-researcher. I see myself at the beginning of each chapter through my poetry announcing my presence, reminding both me and the reader that the content was

gathered through the generosity of my participants, but then organised and analysed through the voice and mind that writes the poetry, because I am a black woman Prison Service employee.

By way of conclusion, the following sections will summarise the various themes in the study. Furthermore, the review will illustrate the contributions made with regard to the theorising of black women as employees in the UK. Because previously there has been no clear study that has attempted to explore such issues in the context that they occurred, this study can act as a framework of how to pursue intersectionality and organisational psychodynamics within the context of British prisons.

12.1 Summary of themes

The study highlights the continued oppression of black women and expands this view by examining the defense mechanisms they utilise to overcome their challenges. In addition, while placing black women at the core of the analysis, the study also takes into account the psychodynamics of the organisation concerned, by looking at how organisational structures and processes act as social defense mechanisms to protect staff members from the anxiety created by the multiple tasks of prisons, which is to protect, punish and rehabilitate, as well as to avoid anxiety produced by racial and gender difference. Moreover, the roles and duties ascribed to both operational and non-operational staff also illuminated the tensions between staff groups.

The combination of intersectionality and organisational psychodynamics has, I have argued, provided a deep and full insight into the daily reality of black women. A number of questions are therefore addressed in this final chapter. What is known about the psychosocial experience of black women that was not known before this study was carried out? What are the themes identified? What direction for future research is suggested by the findings?

The data obtained supported the argument that black women's shared socio-historical legacy of gender and racial inequality placed them on the margins of the organisation, positioning them as 'outsiders within'. Although they were employees, they encountered inequality because of the intersection of gender and race. As a result of their marginality, many of the participants felt a sense of not belonging or not being a part of the organisation, and therefore it was clear that their race and gender identity had primacy over their occupational identity. The majority of the women also talked about the tension between their multiple identity of being black, woman and prison employee. They explained how their racial identity made them feel isolated, and described racial incidents and situations that they felt were a consequence of their gender and race.

The women spoke of the implicit undermining of their authority, autonomy, abilities and competence, which made them feel pressurised to rise above their white male and female counterparts by enduring adversity without seeking support from their peers. The women

described the utilisation of a number of defense mechanisms such as confidence, perseverance and strength, all of which fall within the remit of the notion of SBW, to address racism and sexism that were operating on a conscious and/or unconscious level within the organisation. The Catalyst organisation (2006) reported that black women face 'double exclusion' in the workplace because of race and gender, and often do not have mentors to provide support. The women in this study felt they were not able to receive support from their colleagues and therefore relied on external support from family and friends, as well as drawing on internal coping mechanisms as a means to remain grounded and content.

The study also found that black women's perceptions of their interaction with colleagues are not straightforward. At times through the interviews, they questioned whether it was a result of their gender and/or race, and/or a combination of both, which resulted in their negative encounters. What was particularly interesting from the findings was their awareness of their multiple disadvantages within this occupational context.

12.2 Relevance of research in prison occupation literature

This study addressed gaps identified in the background literature in many ways. First, the standpoint of black women revealed interesting insights into the experience of this group's work reality. The participants' accounts showed that their psychosocial experience is influenced by various factors, but nevertheless underlined by their gendered racialisation. This illustrates the importance of taking into account the intersection of

gender and race when wanting to research the experience of employees from marginalised groups. Second, this study explored the concept of intersectionality and organisational psychodynamics, which has previously been missing from much of the work on prison occupation. Applying an organisational psychodynamics framework to examine the irrational practices that fragment and cause painful experiences to individuals within the workplace provides new insights into the British Prison Service, and this has not been attempted before. In addition, this analytical tool has shown that prisons are emotional places in which anxiety is produced and needs to be defended against, and as a result social defenses are inherent in the structure of the organisation. This study provides examples of how social defenses operate in the workplace at the individual, group and organisational level. By combining these theoretical frameworks in one study, I have been able to show how black women as gendered and racialised subjects disrupt the organisation which is white and male-dominated, and thus highlight how anxiety is not just a result of the multiple tasks of prisons but in fact a response to racial difference. In essence, the root of the anxiety comes from institutional racism.

Thus, black women are caught up in a web of different power relations and are simultaneously privileged and oppressed as a result of their multiple identities. My research not only incorporated black women's race, but looked at ways of how it interacts with gender and organisational identity to create a unique form of identity for this group, premised on the multiplicity of black women's identities. The study also highlights the limitations of other studies, which do not take into account the multiple identities of the

individual, the organisational context, and what happens within the environment at a conscious and unconscious level.

12.3 The theoretical framework

I have chosen to use an intersectional framework and organisational psychodynamics theory because it was important for me to examine how subjectivity and social construction (of race and gender) intersect in ways that an individual both influences, and is influenced, by his or her discursive, material, historical and social context. These combined theories have provided me with a more textured way of conceptualising the way in which black women's subjectivity is formed within the prison environment and the relational dynamics that occur as a result of both gender and racial difference. This in turn, has expanded my understanding of how interpersonal relations mediate the ways that organisational dynamics and social structures come to be propagated in an individual's everyday working life. In addition, my literature review has not uncovered research, studies, or articles that have addressed the impact of sexism and racism combined on the psychosocial experience of black women within the British Prison Service. The findings from this research may therefore add to, or begin, a dialogue on the defense mechanisms black women initiate to negotiate racial and gender discrimination within the workplace, as well as help to understand the reasons for poor race relations and racial isolation experienced by employees from minority groups.

12.4 Implications

The standpoint of the participants was portrayed throughout this thesis and therefore the voices of the black women were clearly articulated and presented. I have drawn together the main themes, the conclusions drawn, and the existing literature to put forward a number of implications for future studies.

Implications for the British Prison Service

The first implication for the British Prison Service is to acknowledge black women's unique experience, which is derived from two exceptionally powerful and prevalent systems of oppression: race and gender. This phenomenon should be investigated further. That said, quantitative studies that adopt a comparative approach, such as the HMIP (2005) *Parallel Worlds: A Thematic Review of Race Relations in Prisons*, should provide a gender breakdown not only for prisoners but for staff as well. In addition, issues that have arisen from this study, such as black staff feeling they are being treated as outsiders, or the discounting of black women's views and opinions, as well as the value they may bring to the organisation, should also be addressed.

The second implication is that the British Prison Service should examine the adverse impact of its structure and practices that perpetuate a culture of mistrust, suspicion and violence, in order to encourage and sustain a more diverse workforce. For too long the organisation has awarded 'token' positions to black women, as demonstrated in the recruitment of Diversity Managers discussed in Chapter 8, and other specialist positions as shown in Chapter 9.

A different approach needs to be taken by the Prison Service with regard to the way it approaches poor race relations. The Prison Service generally responds to poor race relations as something that can be put right through training in showing how different cultures experience life, which thereby denies its dynamic nature. Instead, the Prison Service should begin to think about how individual's subjectivity influences behaviour at the individual, group and organisational levels, which creates power relations and inter-group dynamics (Holvino, 2003). By doing so, organisationally, it might examine how the culture of the organisation might be changed to create positive interactions between racial groups in the workplace.

Recommendations for future research

Future research might examine the conceptual framework applied in this study by incorporating other social categories, such as sexual orientation, class, disability, etc., to establish the way in which they affect individuals and how these social categories are drawn upon to construct demarcations between individuals and groups within the prison context. This theoretical framework might also be applied to other organisations to establish whether the intersection of race and gender creates similar relational dynamics. Other recommendations for further research include the following: the Prison Service could explore the impact of witnessing race-related C&R and prison officer group dynamics; identify additional elements of organisational culture; and examine how this affects different employee groups.

The research was limited with regard to the dynamics of career progression and staff training within the Prison Service. The relationship between these two entities would benefit by being explored further. Scholars such as Marilyn Davidson (1992) have found that black women are generally better qualified than their white counterparts because of the pressure of being insiders/outsideers. This, however, was not explored in this study. Nevertheless, many of the black women talked about their career aspirations and the 'glass ceiling' that prevented their career progression. A recommendation would be for future studies to identify whether there is a correlation between black women's qualifications and positions within the service.

13 References

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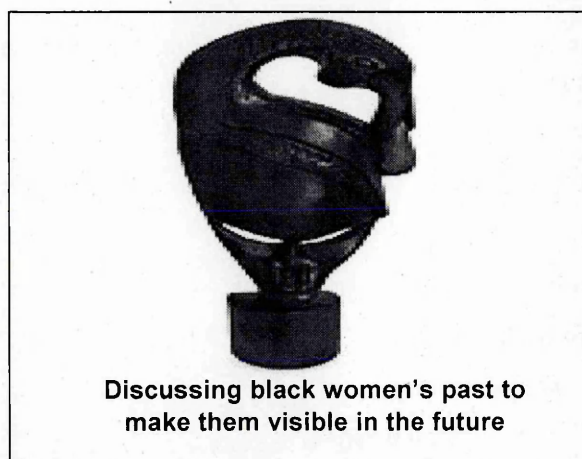
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14.1 Appendix 1

Promotion Leaflet

The Experiences of Black Women Working in the British Prison Service



Background

Over the years I have become increasingly interested in what it means to be black, a woman, and a Prison Service employee. My interest in this topic stems from the lack of research on this topic.

The study

The aim of the study is to develop a picture of black women as prison service employees.

The project is divided into 3 phases:

- Focus groups
- One-to-one interviews
- Participant observation

This research project is approved by the Open University Human Participants Materials Ethics Committee.

The Prison Service National Research Committee are considering the research design.

Are you African and/or Asian and/or Caribbean origin or descent?

Are you a woman?

Have you worked for the Prison Service for 6 months or more?

Are you none of the above categories? (male or female; ethnic minority or ethnic majority)

Would you be willing to take part in an interview?

If the answer is yes to these questions, I would like to invite you to volunteer to be interviewed. If you are willing to volunteer please return the tear-off slip overleaf to either the address indicated or you can leave in the box at signing in desk. Please give a contact number and/or address where I can reach you to arrange a specific date and time for interview.

Alternatively you can contact me by post, email, or phone, to discuss the study further or to take part. Please note that all participation will be confidential.

 Post

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14.2 Appendix 2

Information Sheet

I am a student at The Open University and a Prison Service employee. I am interested in the experiences of black women working in the Prison Service. The purpose of the research is to explore the meanings black women associate with their work life by investigating what it means to be black (black refers to participants whose origin or descent is African and/or Caribbean and/or Asian, female and a Prison Service employee).

The study will involve one-to-one interviews, participant organisational observation and photo-elicitation – photo-elicitation refers to the use of photographs during interviews to ascertain your feelings and views about the photograph (a separate consent form is provided for photo-elicitation interviews and the use of images).

The study is divided into four parts:

- Focus study group (pilot) – this will take place with 6–8 black women. The aim is to discuss general issues associated with being a black woman working in the British Prison Service.
- One-to-one interviews – the interview is designed to be approximately 45 minutes. The interview will be face-to-face and the questions semi-structured. You will have the opportunity to expand on the topic or talk about related ideas during the interviews, decline from answering questions you feel uncomfortable with, or stop the interview at any time. The interview stage will involve two interviews with a gap of approximately six months between them.
- Participant organisational observation is a process that allows the researcher to observe, describe, document and analyse the organisation's culture and process. This involves spending time in three different prisons.
- Photo-elicitation – You will be given a disposable camera to take pictures of objects that you relate to your place of work. The photographs will then be used as a prompt to explore meanings from your point of view during the second interview.

You have the choice to take part in all sections, one section or two sections of the study.

If you would like to talk to someone else about this research you can contact the PhD Supervisor confidentially.

All the information will be kept confidential. I will keep the data in a secure place. No other person will have access to this information. Upon completion of this project, all personal information will be destroyed in accordance with The Data Protection Act 1998.

As a participant, you have the right to withdraw from the research at any stage and take your data with you or request for it to be destroyed.

14.3 Appendix 3

Certificate of Consent

THE EXPERIENCES OF BLACK WOMEN WORKING IN THE BRITISH PRISON SERVICE

Name of participant:

Contact details:.....

.....

1. Your participation is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your relationship with your employer. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time.
2. You understand that your participation is voluntary. The intent and purpose of the study has been explained by the researcher. You are aware of your right to stop the interview at any time, without having to give an explanation.
3. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed by the researcher. The tape-recordings will be kept securely and anonymised. A copy of your own interview transcript will be sent to you on request; you are entitled to check the transcript and make changes. You also have the opportunity to advise me of any action you feel I need to take to protect your privacy.
4. All personal information provided will remain confidential, and information which may identify participants will not be made publicly available.
5. The following information has been explained: the findings of the research will be written up as part of a PhD thesis, as general feedback for the Prison Service and other organisations interested in this work; the findings will be published; the written work may include quotations from the interviews; individuals will never be named or in any other way identified.

- 6. The researcher has explained that participants can ask questions about the study, or raise concerns about taking part in the research and participants' rights.
- 7. The researcher has explained that participants can contact the PhD supervisor at any point of the research.
- 8. Full information regarding the aims of the research has been explained.
- 9. You understand you have the right to withdraw from the research at any time, taking your data with you or request for it to be destroyed.
- 10. The researcher's name and a contact number and address have been provided.
- 11. The PhD Supervisor's name and a contact number and address have been provided.

I have read the above form and understand the nature of the research. With the understanding that I can withdraw at any time and for whatever reason, I consent to participate in this research study.

Signed: Date:

(By participant)

Print name:

Signed: Date:

(By researcher)

Print Name:

1 copy to participant, 1 copy for researcher.

14.4 Appendix 4

Participants' Pen-Picture

1. Shirley is a manager G grade and has undertaken various roles at this grade. She first worked as a Diversity Manager; when she became surplus she undertook various roles but remained at the same grade. Shirley currently remains on the surplus list.
2. Krishma is a manager F grade; she works in developing policies to tackle radicalisation.
3. Etta is a personal secretary. She provides support across a wide range of services within her department, including diary planning, arranging and booking meetings, receiving phone calls, typing, minute-taking and filing.
4. Ella is a temporary acting senior officer. She has the same responsibilities as a permanent senior officer. She has line management responsibilities for a group of prison officers who work on a residential unit. Her role is to manage the residential unit ensuring a number of tasks are completed, for example, making sure her staff search cells in accordance with current instructions and that this is recorded. She also has to ensure that prisoners are unlocked for the hours specified in regime requirements, as well as respond to prisoner complaints, ensuring the residential unit is safe and other various tasks associated with managing a residential unit.
5. Deloris is an EO. She was on secondment at the time of the interview.
6. Lorna White is a senior manager and a drug strategy specialist. She was responsible for devising drug interventions for the Prison Service.
7. Little is a probation officer and currently works within the Interventions Department; her role is to deliver a substance misuse programme which is designed for prisoners with a history of problematic drug use. The role includes assessment of, and reporting on, group participants and ensuring delivery of the programme is to the required standard.
8. Lesia is a senior manager and a Skills and Employment Specialist.
9. Annette is a Diversity Manager. Although she is a manager, she does not line-manage any staff. As the Diversity Manager she has to ensure that the establishment meets its legal requirements to deliver race equality by making recommendations to the senior management team (SMT) for managing diversity and related risks across the establishment, and ensuring that the establishment has in place systems to ensure compliance with all associated legislation and HMP's policies.
10. Lisa is a Diversity Manager. She had line-management responsibility for a SO-REO. As the Diversity Manager she has to ensure that the establishment meets its legal requirements

to deliver race equality by making recommendations to the senior management team (SMT) for managing diversity and related risks across the establishment, and ensuring that the establishment has in place systems to ensure compliance with all associated legislation and HMPs policies.

11. Monique is a Catering Manager. She line-manages the catering staff and is accountable for all catering systems, stock check, food safety and hygiene in the catering department and in all food serverly areas across the prison.
12. Andy is a Senior Prison Custody Officer. Her job title is different to Ella's because she works in a private prison. She has line management responsibilities for a group of prison officers who work on a residential unit. Her role is to manage the residential unit, ensuring a number of key work and tasks are similar to those carried out by prison senior officers.
13. Raisa is a qualified teacher. She taught literacy and numeracy as well as social and life skills to prisoners within the education department.
14. Trina is a Prison Officer who works directly with prisoners. At the time of the interview she was based in the healthcare department. Her role involved promoting pro social behaviour, encouraging prisoners to address their offending behaviour, and ensuring that all Prison Service rules, orders and instructions are followed. Prison Officers are required to contribute to an orderly, safe and secure environment and to work within the competency and qualities framework.
15. Anastasia is a Diversity Manager. As the Diversity Manager she has to ensure that the establishment meets its legal requirements to deliver race equality by making recommendations to the Senior Management Team (SMT) for managing diversity and related risks across the establishment, and ensuring that the establishment has in place systems to ensure compliance with all associated legislation and HMP's policies.
16. Alicia is a personal secretary. She provides support across a wide range of services within her department, including diary planning, arranging and booking meetings, receiving phone calls, typing, minute-taking and filing.
17. Rosa is a Prison Officer who works directly with prisoners. At the time of the interview she worked in resettlement, supporting prisoners in education, training and employment.

14.5 Appendix 5

Focus Group Prompts 25/01/2012

Prison culture

1. What words would you use to describe prison service culture a) as a whole b) within your place of work and why? (Participants to pick 1–3 words each).
2. Do you think there are any particular aspects that affect black women staff differently?

Working relationships

3. How would you describe black women's treatment by their a) colleagues b) managers?
4. How would you describe black women's working relationships within the service?

Characteristics

5. What issues do you think affect black women staff?
6. Are black female prison workers more interested in challenging racial discrimination rather than sexual harassment? If yes, why?

Staff network

7. How would you describe the support given by RESPECT to members who require it?
8. How is the support given to women different/similar to that given to black men?

14.6 Appendix 6

Questions for Second Interview

Lesia

1. Describe your values, where they originate from and how they influence you at work.
2. You refer to your Christianity at points of difficulty in your narrative; can you explain the role religion plays in your work life?
3. What motivates you to remain focused on your work, as well as maintain a high standard of delivery and effectiveness during times of adversity?
4. You talked about making changes to your department when you became education manager and wanting the staff make-up to reflect the prison population. Could you describe why you felt this was necessary and why it was important for you to be open about it?
5. A dominant theme that comes out in all participants' transcripts is the SBW. What is your understanding of this concept, and what does it mean to you?

Ella

1. You associate your outspokenness to being a black woman and have described how this has hindered your career progression. Have you got any thoughts or views as to how you intend to continue pursuing your career with this particular characteristic?
2. You refer to your Christianity at points of difficulty in your narrative; can you explain the role religion plays in your work life?
3. In your narrative you came across as a woman who maintains high standards of professionalism, integrity and self-worth. Can you describe how you have developed these traits and are able to sustain them during your difficult periods.
4. In specific areas of your narrative you describe feelings of anger. What information and energy does anger provide for you?
5. A dominant theme which comes out in all participants' narratives is the SBW. What is your understanding of this concept and what does it mean to you?

Lisa

1. In your first interview, you described taking the side of Ruth and Tina, in relation to organising their leaving and becoming one of them. What did you mean when you said you had become 'one of them'?
2. You went into detail about your triad relationship with Ruth and Tina and how you felt they undermined you at times; but yet you were able to continue to function and carry out your duties. Can you describe the resources you used to enable you to do this?

3. You may recall when describing the time when your son was injured that the Governor at the time visited your home, but you were relieved not to be in. I wonder if you could speak a bit more about 1) why you felt that way, 2) why it was important to separate your personal life from your colleagues?
4. You talked about feeling threatened and uncomfortable after a meeting you attended with the Deputy Governor. But you maintained your composure during the meeting and responded to points in his minutes which you disagreed with. Can you describe where your inner strength/resilience comes from, and why you felt it was necessary to respond in writing to the points with which you disagreed?
5. A dominant theme that comes out in all participants' transcripts is the SBW. What is your understanding of this concept and what does it mean to you?

Rosa

1. In specific areas of your narrative you describe feelings of anger. What information and energy does anger provide for you?
2. You refer to your Christianity at points of difficulty in your narrative; can you explain the role religion plays in your work life?
3. You talk a lot about racial isolation in respect of being the only black woman at times in work. How did you feel in such situations and how were you able to cope and function effectively?
4. You describe being meticulous when completing your work and having very high standards, for example taking work home to complete in your own time to meet targets. Can you explain why you felt it was necessary to work in this way?
5. A dominant theme that comes out in all participants' transcripts is the SBW. What is your understanding of this concept and what does it mean to you?

Lorna White

1. What motivates you to remain focused on your work as well as to maintain a high standard of delivery and effectiveness during times of adversity?
2. In your narrative you came across as a woman who maintained high standards of professionalism, integrity and self-worth. Can you describe how you have developed these traits and are able to sustain them during your difficult periods?
3. When you talked about the disbandment of your original department, I got a sense that there was a deeper meaning to the situation that I thought maybe related to racial responsibility. Could you talk a bit more about how you felt as a black woman losing your department in such an underhand way to your white female counterpart?

4. Could you explain why you felt you may have been perceived as empire-building when you approached your line manager for additional staff?
5. A dominant theme that comes out in all participants' transcripts is the SBW. What is your understanding of this concept and what does it mean to you?

Little

1. You describe feeling comfortable inhabiting black and white spaces such as the officer's mess. Can you talk a little more about this?
2. Can you explain the process you went through during your time of self-reflection and future career orientation? Why did you feel it was necessary to go through this process?
3. You related your style of work, such as being methodical and humanistic, to your personal life and mentioned a negative comment, 'You're too deep', which was made by a male peer. Could you maybe provide some background as to what instigated the comment and how that comment made you feel and affected the way you view yourself?
4. You came across as a woman with high integrity, focused and community-orientated. Can you explain how you developed these characteristics, where they stemmed from and how you maintain them in an organisation whose values appear to contradict yours?
5. A dominant theme that comes out in all participants' transcripts is the SBW. What is your understanding of this concept and what does it mean to you?

Monique

1. How do you feel about the career opportunities you have had in the service, while other black women may have encountered the glass ceiling?
2. Can you explain why you do not associate with work colleagues outside of work?
3. Black women's role is to support, nurture, protect and uplift the black community. We take this into our role at work; for example, you have done a lot of work with RESPECT. How do you feel about this responsibility?
4. How has your racial socialisation affected your work ethics and ability to function effectively in the prison?
5. A dominant theme that comes out in all participants' transcripts is the SBW. What is your understanding of this concept and what does it mean to you?

14.7 Appendix 7

Themes and Sub Themes from First Interviews

	Themes	Sub themes
1	Support/empowerment	religion/spirituality family external friends colleagues
2	Race	isolation pride discrimination history challenging responsibility oppression
3	Professional image	high work standards public appearance pride
4	Barriers to professional socialisation	ostracism gender/racial discrimination 'outsider within' alienation isolation social marginalisation un-met expectations betrayal
5	SBW	black matriarch hard working persistence tenacity strength internalising feelings anger double-jeopardy confident high self-esteem autonomous
6	Integrity	outspoken frankness self-esteem confident
7	Organisational culture	political games undermining others office politics practices
8	Negative feelings	anger betrayal frustration tension helplessness
9	Relationships	Black/White women dyad White men Black men Black women